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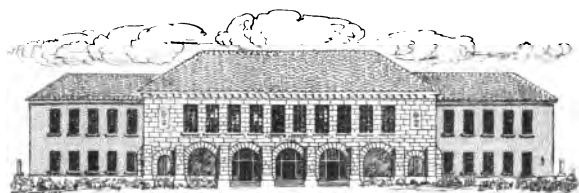
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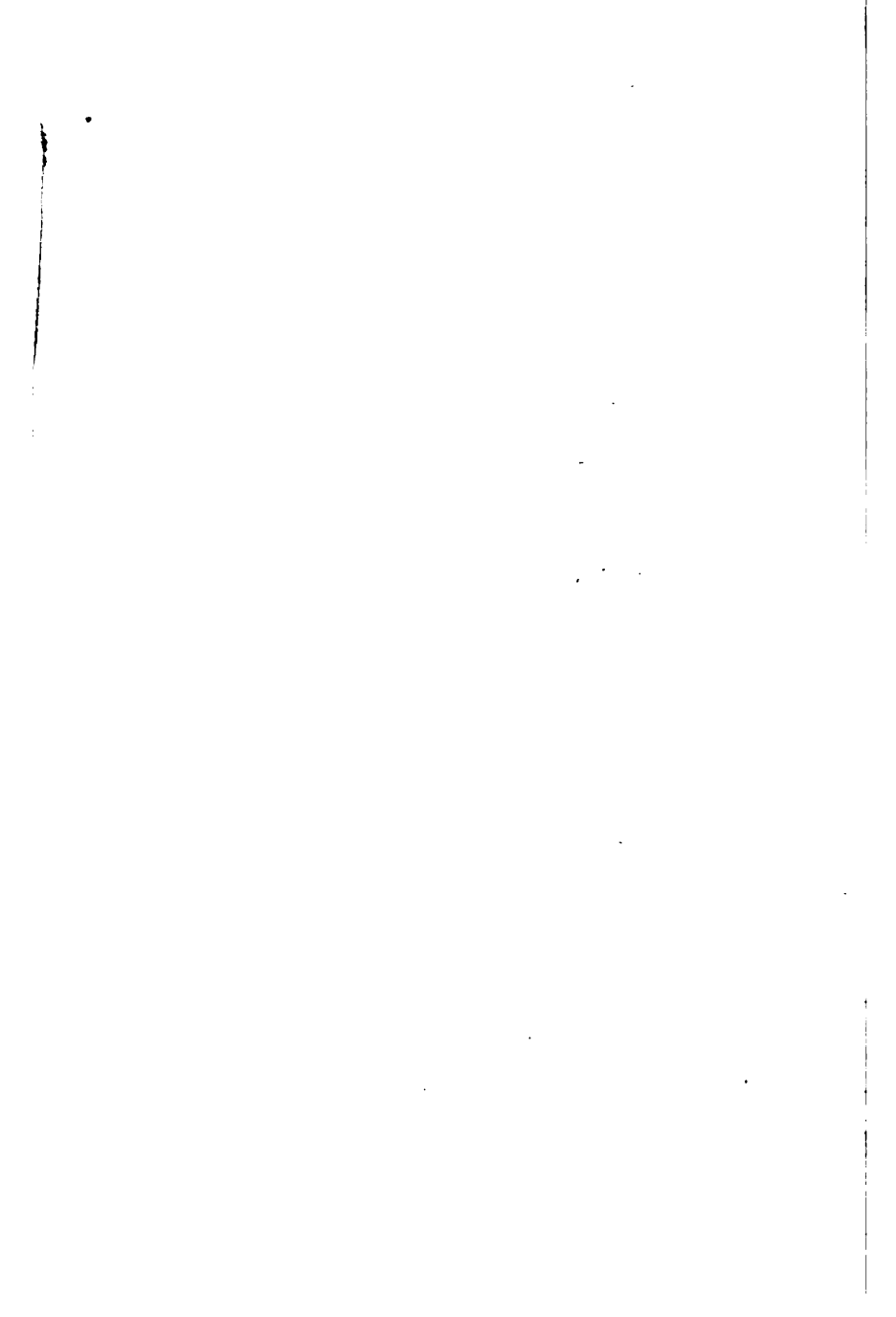


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"THE SOLDIERS OF THE KING APPEARED WITH ORDERS THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD . . . LEAVE HOMES AND HARVESTS AND CATTLE."

STORIES OF COLONY AND NATION

LADS AND LASSIES OF OTHER DAYS

BY

LILLIAN L. PRICE

NORMAL AND TRAINING SCHOOL, NEWARK,
NEW JERSEY



SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

NEW YORK

BOSTON

CHICAGO

623313

Stories of Colony^C and Nation

The War for Independence

By EVERETT T. TOMLINSON

Illustrated. 184 pp.

The War of 1812

By EVERETT T. TOMLINSON

Illustrated. (In preparation)

Lads and Lassies of Other Days

By LILLIAN M. PRICE

Illustrated. 180 pp.

The Building of the Nation

By LUCY E. L. TAYLOR

Illustrated. (In preparation)

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PREFACE

THE child is awakened through the pages of history to a love of literature; or from the pages of literature he is led into the living interest of history. The earliest teaching of history is best begun through biography and the hero tale.

But children, at the age when they are entering upon the formal study of the history of their country, are entering also the period of life when fiction, romance, vivid action, and heroes and heroines of their own sort attract most powerfully.

The historical novel will not suffice: its scope is too remote; its style too mature. But the cultivation of a taste which may lead to the future enjoyment of historical literature is perhaps as essential as the mere fact-presenting of history, indeed even more essential.

Out of the fabric of great historical events or of well-known historical stages in the growth of our country, these little stories have been woven.

They cover a period extending from the contentment of the colonies under the maternal care of England to their independence and consciousness of a separate national life. Five of the stories appeared first in the pages of the children's magazine, *St. Nicholas*. They

are "Letitia and the Redcoats," "My Aunt Aurora's Reticule," "Cornwallis's Men," "Letty Penn's Visit," and "The Bulb of the Crimson Tulip." They are reproduced here by the kind permission of The Century Company.

In the hope that the stories may deepen the love of country in American boys and girls, the book is sent forth to the American schoolroom.

LILLIAN L. PRICE.

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LADS AND LASSIES OF OTHER DAYS

LETTY PENN'S VISIT

I MIND how the roses smelled, and the lilies,—mother's garden was full of flowers,—and I mind how proud I was of the new house of barked logs; 'twas the only one in Gwynedd, and had its staircase outside, very stately. I mind all this, Gwen, and more, when thee gives me that sprig of lemon-verbena, my little granddaughter. Thee must have heard the story of Letty Penn's visit? Thee hasn't? Then sit thee down, my love. I like to tell it.

For all that I was Quaker-bred, the Evans blood still had its sway in me. In Wales, thee knows, the Evanses were not of the Friends. And I had soft curls and pretty dimples, and dancing came readily to my young feet. But in the old days at Gwynedd—no, no! I must not dance.

The Indians were very friendly, and across the Wissahickon dwelt a settlement of them. A young squaw that came sometimes to our house made friends with me. I remember her yet. She was a lithe, tall girl, graceful, too; and she—but thee must wait. I went often to her camp and learned besides weaving—but thee must wait.

William Penn had but just finished his house at Pennsbury. I mind the talk of its splendor. 'Twas of fine English fashion and had, moreover, a great hall for Indian receptions, and there the Lord Proprietor of our Province kept his state with all simplicity and dignity. You may well guess the flutter I was in, one October afternoon, when Brother Abner's long shanks came flying up the garden, and he fell over Aunt Jane's apple bowl as he tumbled into the kitchen.

"'Tis three by the dial," he gasped, "and at five comes the Lord Proprietor, William Penn, and his daughter Letty to pass the night with us. Father sends thee word to make ready."

I mind me I was stinting on my sampler, and such a wry stitch as I put into the cassowary's leg! Alas, it cost me ten stitches to get it out!

But therewith began a preparation. My Aunt Jane was of the sterner sort, while my mother was all peace. 'Twas Aunt Jane who kept my heels flying hither and yon; and truly I dreamed so long of what Letty Penn would be like, over the honey jar down in the cellar, that I earned the box o' the ear Aunt Jane gave me, though she spoke out about it afterward in the meeting — dear soul! — as an infirmity of temper. We built a great fire in the best bedroom, and I aired the linen for mother, all sweet with lemon-verbena and lavender spears.

"Thee shall take Letty to sleep in thy bed," said mother. And straightway, as I stood before the fire with a fat goose-feather pillow in my mouth, tugging

on the cover, the naughty thought crept into my mind which made all the trouble. Perchance Aunt Jane's cuff roused my Welsh blood. So *she* said, dear soul!

When I heard the hoof beats coming down the road, I grew suddenly shy and climbed into the great blue chest and nestled down into the thick comforters to rouse enough courage by judicious hiding, so that I might greet Letty Penn in seemly fashion. When Abner led away the horses, I slipped down and peered through the great window. William Penn stood shaking hands with my elders, and I mind yet his sweet, strong smile. He had a courtly manner, and his daughter lacked it not. She sat before the fire with riding cloak thrown back, and a silken bonnet of plain fashion lying on her lap. Her stout little boots were thrust out toward the fire as if her feet were cold, and she looked up into Aunt Jane's face with a pretty winsome smile that set my heart a-beating. I loved her then and was ready to tell her all my secrets before I had even spoken to her.

So I entered the room and was presented to William Penn, who kissed me kindly on the forehead, and then I was led to Letty. While Aunt Jane lingered near us, we said but pretty formalities. Presently the supper called her away; and I, pulling a low settle closer by the fire, said softly, unwrapping her cloak the while: "Thee's cold. Come sit on my settle in this warm corner. Thee's had a long ride, and I know how a pillion tires one. Let me rub thy hands — so. Wait a bit. Does thee like cats? Thee can have my Mopsy to warm thee."

"Thee's kind," said Letty Penn, hugging my cat. "Is thy name Gwen?"

"Yea," I replied; "Gwen Evans. Is thee not very hungry?"

She laughed. "Don't thee tell any one, but I truly am," she said. And we squeezed each other's hands when Aunt Jane set a cold roast on the table.

I mind that supper, and how pretty our manners were, and how the boys sat in a long solemn row and ate great quantities, though their knee buckles knocked together in shy affright if ever they were addressed.

William Penn talked sagely to my father of Indian treaties, and all the while, with my naughty poll full of its mischievous plan, I helped my brother Abner bountifully to cheese and cakes, the better to coax him later to lay a fire in my bedchamber. And so he did.

When it came time for the children's candles, I felt my heart grow jubilant. At last I could talk to Letty, free from Aunt Jane's watchful eyes.

I mind me how quaintly sweet my room was, with white dimity hangings and a little, dumpling feather bed. I pulled two crickets up to the crackling fire, and we cuddled together upon them. "I think my father likes thine," said Letty; "and thy mother is sweet."

"Thy father is a great man," I said. "Does thee think us simple here?"

"Not I, truly," said Letty, frankly.

"Was thee ever," I said, bending close to her — "was thee ever sorry thee was born a Friend?"

"Never. Was thee?"

"Yea!" I returned vehemently. "I wish I had been born an Indian! Oh, 'tis fine!"

"Thee should not wish to be a heathen savage. Thee should be glad thee's of the Lord's people," remonstrated Letty.

"Nay, but Indian women can dance and roam the woods all day. I hate ugly samplers and stiff caps and Aunt Jane's 'Nay, nay,' if ever I trip it about the garden. Father's lambkins frisk, and the Lord made them, and the little leaves dance."

With that I made a dive under my white foot-valance, and came out tugging a battered bandbox. "Thee must never tell," I said, tossing my cap on the bed and pulling a tall, hideous Indian headdress over my curls, "but I am going to show thee an Indian dance. They say I am never to dance, but thee shall see!"

Off came my calfskin boots, and on went a pair of moccasins. I wound some beads about my neck; I twisted a scarf about my waist, all the while watching Letty alertly to see if she admired me. A merry laughter shone in her eyes. Thereupon I sprang to my feet and straightway began such a twisting, whirling, swaying, and leaping, with sidewise bounds, with clutchings of the air, and mad "pot-cheesing" of my sober gown into giddy ballooning, as might well have startled any one. My curls flew; I made the motions of flinging tomahawks, — all learned with care in the woods of that same Indian woman, — and Letty looked on delighted.

There, no doubt, my brother also was leaning on the ship's rail and straining his eyes to the home shore; but how different were our feelings!

I was glad when a sailor clapped me on the shoulder and said, "Come to your bunk, the cap'n says." He led me below to a rough rope hammock in a dim corner between decks.

Near me, in another hammock, a sailor, drunk and asleep, was snoring heavily. By the flare of a candle in my conductor's hand I could just discern my quarters. I wrapped my cloak about me, pulled my hat over my eyes, and settled as comfortably as was possible in an exceedingly uncomfortable bunk.

The sailor, seeing me stowed, left me.

With what calmness I could muster, I now turned my situation over in my mind; but the thought of how I was to be wrenched away, perhaps forever, from my mother and my dearly loved brother brought the salt tears to wet my cheeks. I knew that in a short time we should be slipping down the bay with the tide, and out to sea. I doubted not that the captain's port was New York; but I could not, by any line of reasoning, convince myself that one who had been present at the hiding of so much treasure, would ever be allowed to return to that spot again. The escape I planned was a fearful hazard, but to remain was a greater one.

If I failed, it would be to go to a gentler death than that which in all probability awaited me at the hands of this godless, wicked crew.

I knew by certain sounds that we were weighing anchor, and in a few minutes I felt the first forward

heave of the freed sloop. Cautiously descending from my bunk, I took my cloak and hat, wrapped the cloak about some sailor's clothes lying near me in a pile, placed the hat carefully, and arranged a dummy in my hammock to represent my sleeping figure. Then I crouched among some bales, listening to every sound and awaiting an opportunity to creep upstairs. Sounds met my ears which told me that the crew were pretty



"THERE, FAR TO THE LEFT, LAY . . . THE HUGE HULK OF
THE *NANCIE CLEWS*"

generally carousing. I removed my shoes and hurried on deck, meeting no one. After a second's listening, I made for a pile of bales on the forward deck and, holding my breath, crept among them. The wild songs below deck were growing wilder, when suddenly I heard the captain's voice, a thud, as if some object were violently thrown, and then silence. The sloop showed

no lights; and as I strained my eyes, there, far to the left lay what I was looking for, praying for, the huge hulk of the *Nancie Clews*.

My heart suddenly leaped into my throat and stuck there, a cold sweat broke out all over me, my hands trembled, and the lights of the *Nancie* reeled. The *Antonio* slipped along like a shadow. When the merchantman was off our bow, I made a quick run, reached the rail where the rope ladder lay, just as it had been pulled up after the last boat load left for Hore-kill, payed it out softly, inch by inch, overboard, and then, with a leap, my foot was on the uppermost loop, and in a few seconds I dropped quietly into the sea. The captain had made a miscalculation; I was an excellent swimmer. In spite of this fact, I had no intention of swimming from the boat to shore in the early twilight, and making myself a sure mark for pistol shots.

Lying among the bales and casks, I had stripped for my swim, and now, as I struck out steadily from the *Antonio*, I saw the lights of the *Nancie* below me, at what seemed a hopeless distance away. Two things were in my favor: the tide was with me and the current set in the direction of the merchantman. The *Antonio* was away from me like an evil dream. If I could not make the *Nancie*, Delaware water was good to die in. I pushed along with an even, steady stroke, resting on my back now and then, when I felt the push of the tide. I gradually drew nearer and nearer the *Nancie*; but I was also growing cold, frightfully cold, and my arms, with every forward stroke, seemed filled with hot lead and grew heavier and heavier.

Then I prayed; God knows how I prayed! On, on I swam, with pains shooting through me, with thunders bursting in my head, with feebler and feebler stroke, until at length, as I looked up, the *Nancie* loomed above me; a thousand lights glimmered and wavered before my eyes, and I pulled myself together with an almost superhuman effort. One belief had all along pervaded my thoughts—that the nearness of home, the shores of home, would keep Reginald up on deck. In this firm faith I now cried, "Reginald! Reginald! It is I, Felix! Help, before I sink!"

Marvel of marvels! My faith was truth. A startled cry from the rail above answered me. I heard the rattling tackle of a rapidly lowered boat; saw the gleam of a torch; and then, as strong hands gripped me and drew me into the boat, I sank into unconsciousness.

When I regained my senses I was lying, dry and warm, in my brother's bunk; his good, kind face bent over me; as my eyelids lifted, he motioned me to silence and put a spoonful of brandy to my lips. I sank into slumber, but not before I heard him explaining to some one, that I must have put out from home in a boat to come to meet him; that, caught by the tide, I had probably abandoned my boat to avoid being carried out to sea, and had then made a swim of it to the *Nancie*. Love for me and an apology for my untoward rashness mingled in his tones.

I was aroused next morning by the noise of cranes and chains. I sprang up to find Reginald already dressed. He embraced me heartily, chided me for my

foolish trick, and assisted me to dress. After a time the tender came alongside; and in the early morning once more I stood at the rail of the boat, gazing, with reverent thanks to God, at the dear home shores which the night before I had never expected to see again.

My father, his face stamped with an anxiety deeper than any I had ever before in my whole life observed upon it, came forward to greet my brother. When he beheld me, he broke down and rained tears upon my head, as he sprang to clasp me first in his arms. But his reproof was sharp and severe when Reginald told his own version of my story, which he now thoroughly believed, although I had not verified a word.

My mother's joy at regaining me showed only too plainly what her suffering had been. "For my sake, Felix," she said, "you should never have undertaken that foolhardy thing."

"I did not, mother," I returned; "I was caught in the South Cove by Captain Kidd, a certain pirate, and thence carried to his sloop, the *Antonio*, whence I escaped to the *Nancie Clews* which luckily lay outside."

Both my father and my brother received this statement with looks which troubled me.

"Lad," said my father, "I've had patience too long with your dreaming ways; in the spring to school you go, over to London."

I knew he thought me lying. Reginald, too, thought I had lied; and only to my mother dared I pour forth the truth of those few hours.

I shunned the little cove; its ill-gotten treasure could lie there and rust forever, so far as I was concerned.

For a long time I shunned the beach also and took to riding abroad over the country, much to my father's delight.

One night a friend of his, who was dining with us, told of the presence of Captain Kidd in New York, and gave much information regarding his guilty career.

My father raised his eyes to my face, and in them I read a puzzled question. Reginald, too, stared thoughtfully at me over his fish.

Next day he proposed a walk along the beach and, as I expected, led in the direction of South Cove. All the way there he amused me with merry tales of his life in London, and not until we entered the cove did his face grow sober. I looked toward the spot where the treasure was buried. The ground had been recently broken open, as a pile of dirt around a rough hole testified; two boat hooks lay near the bushes; a red silk bandana was trampled on the ground; and, hanging from a twig, was a gold earring.

Reginald stared in amaze.

"They came back," said I, "as I thought they would, and carried off their ill-gotten gains. I should have had but slim chance of my life, had they not found them."

My brother was looking at me with a new expression. As we turned back up the shore and I told him my story, I could see how he was forced to reconstruct some views which he had held of me all his life.

"Dear father," he said before dinner that night, "you and I owe Felix an apology. He's as brave as he is honest, an honest hero in fact;" and therewith he set forth my adventure to my astonished father, weav-

ing about it such a wealth of color and description as would easily have led one to believe him the romancer of the family, and not I.

At its close I read in my father's face that the tale had greatly exalted his opinion of me, and that at last I held with Reginald an equal place in his affection.

Captain William Kidd died for his crimes in London, in the year 1701, while I was at school there. As to how much or how little he was guilty of them, that is writ, once and for all, in the book of God's Judgment.

MY AUNT AURORA'S RETICULE

"THEE's laughing at my reticule, child Alice," said Grandma, spreading it out on her lap as she lifted the wide bag from the cedar chest and tenderly stroked its faded green satin. "Dear, dear! how well I remember putting in that bead work! 'Twas for my aunt Aurora that I made it. 'Twas only as a task that I did stitching; for, being a Friend, I held not to gewgaws. Nay, old bag, thee was bonny when thee was new! See, it is an ample bag. We held to plenty of space in those days. And never, while memory serves, shall I forget the reticule's first journey. 'Twas not to a Philadelphia assembly, with my aunt Aurora's purple square-toed slippers and gorgeous dancing-fan stowed away in it, — though I dare say it traveled that way often enough, — but 'twas a grewsome journey, the like to make thine ears to tingle. Come, I must tell thee of it."

My uncle Jacob was of the world's people, but my aunt Hannah — that was my father's sister — was a strict Friend. My uncle Jacob was an iron-master; and 'twas a grievous wrong to our people, and especially to my aunt Hannah, that he had made gun castings for a man-o'-war lying in Delaware Bay, and had taken moneys for them. It was therefore his young sister Aurora,

instead of Aunt Hannah, whom he carried with him when he journeyed to Red Bank to receive the moneys of certain merchants there. 'Twas a chance for her to get at Red Bank some bonnets and fripperies in the New York modes, she not being content with the Friends' garb save when she was on horseback traveling. Then she wore it, and bonny she looked in it.

'Twas on their journey homeward that they turned in their nags at our cedars, one night at twilight, while I stood in my garden watching my primroses open.

"Thee's welcome, Aunt Aurora," I cried, well pleased to catch sight of her sweet, rosy face and sparkling brown eyes. Father hastened out to lift her from her saddle, and then he and Uncle Jacob exchanged soberest greetings.

I hastened to draw my aunt into the house and take off her cloak and bonnet. "'Tis a twelvemonth since I have seen thee!" I cried. "Thee's good to look at, Aunt Aurora; and yea, what does thee think! I have finished the reticule!"

"Has thee finished it?" laughed my aunt. "Indeed! Why, thee's a marvelous industrious child! Thee's been at it only two years."

"Yea," I answered shamefacedly; "but thee knows beads are troublous things to chain. I got them into a sore pucker, often and often."

"'Tis a bit of folly," quoth my father, eying it humorously.

"'Tis a beauty," said Aunt Aurora. "Marry, but I think 'twill e'en carry my best new bonnet."

"Of course thee will stay the night at our house Jacob?" said my father.

"Nay," replied Uncle Jacob, "I have a sum of money to place in a man's hands at ten o' the morning to-morrow. The business is urgent, — 'tis a crisis of the man's affairs, — and I must not lag. We but stopped to try your tea cakes and beg that you lend us Hannah. She can safely ride behind me, and Aurora wants her."

The thought of a visit to my uncle's great house set my heart adancing.

"Indeed I must have my promised fortnight's visit from Hannah," urged my aunt, "now that she can travel secure in our company."

"Nay," said my father, "not so secure. Jacob, thee knows the risk thee runs traveling the pine-woods at night. Stay till morning."

"As safe by night as day in those long, lonely stretches," returned my uncle. "And my business must be carried."

"My! Thee's a rash man," cried my father; "for not only does thee cast the implements of war instead of the pruning hooks of peace, but thee ventures into the pine-woods, thickly bestead with highway robbers, when thee has moneys of great value upon thee."

"Tush, brother! I can shoot and ride; and Aurora's shot is as true as mine."

"But the highwayman shoots from covert. Leave the women, and I will lead them over to-morrow myself."

"Nay," said my aunt Aurora, firmly, to this. "Brother rides not alone to-night. But say, Hannah, is thee frightened to go?"

"Does thee want to go?" asked my father.

"Oh, I do most truly!" I said, a great longing seizing me.

"See," said my uncle. He showed us the broad seam in the lining of his loose greatcoat. Inside it lay a deep silk pouch, and flat within that a chamois pouch containing the money. "If we are waylaid, there's a bag o' silver bits in the saddlebags which I will fling them; and then whip and spur will carry us beyond their reach."

"So thee says," said my father. "Hannah, thee must decide. Will thee go?"

I glanced from Aunt Aurora to the moon turning from silver to gold in the pale evening sky and sheening the pine-woods. Then I looked at our cozy supper table, where I was mistress, and thought on the home safety.

"Gyp has seven young puppies," said my aunt Aurora, alluringly.

"Oh, if thee pleases, father, I would e'en like to go!" I decided, forgetting highwaymen at thought of the kennels.

After supper I ran about, getting ready. "If thee takes me, Aunt Aurora, thee must take Boskie," I cried, stooping to lift him from his basket and smoothing his silky locks. Boskie was my little Skye terrier, my only playmate and friend. "I cannot leave Boskie," I said.

"And what with saddlebag and bandbox, pray, where shall Boskie be stowed?" laughed my aunt. "I think he must e'en ride in the bottom of my new silk reticule. There he can cuddle as snug as a bee in thistle-down. What? Has thee a blanket for Boskie? And

a pocket in it for his collar? Thee's a little old maid! But come, my girly; we must hurry to saddles, while the moon is high. We shall need its light in the pine-woods."

'Twas a calm night of midsummer. The moonlight silvered everything. Far to eastward, through the silence, came the sound of the sea. My father most reluctantly bade farewell to his little housekeeper, and we rode sedately away. The night air in the village was sweet with dewy odors of rose and honeysuckle and faint musk, which gave place to heavy warm pine scents as we entered the silver dusk of the woods. I leaned against my uncle's broad back and occasionally chirruped to Boskie, who lay snuggled in the bottom of my aunt Aurora's reticule, which had one string unloosed and dangling down, so that he might get the air. And so we rode for hours. Then my aunt's horse lagged behind a little.

"Brother," she said with an odd little tremble in her voice, "shall we return to Anthony's? Star has a stone in one hoof. She limps now."

"Aurora!" he exclaimed in dismay. Then, "Ah, well, perhaps we shall ride through scot-free, in spite of all our terrors. Nay, we must ride on. There be strange doings in these woods," he continued musingly. "I am little minded to lose treasure to these Jersey highway-men; but duty is duty, and risk is risk. At most they will only rob us."

"And then what will your creditor do?"

"I will sell mine own land to make restitution," he answered.

Boskie whined softly in his bag. He was lying against the pommel of my aunt's saddle for a rest.

"Give him to me," I cried, reaching my hands over for him; but even my fingers stroking his head would not soothe him. "He is too warm in his blanket," I said. "Nay, Boskie, what ails thee? What does thee hear?" I questioned, as he continued his whining.

At this my uncle sprang down and halted both horses. The silence was oppressive; not a sound broke across the night song of insects. He left us, with his pistols in his hands, to reconnoiter a few yards ahead. I was unbuckling Boskie's blanket. My aunt Aurora leaned over to me and said, "Do not take it off, dear. Thee's deft-handed, Hannah. See, brother has left his coat lying on the horse. Slip the moneys into the pocket of the blanket, and strap it close. Haste, my sweetening! They will not seek for moneys in such a place. For we shall surely be searched," she added with a sigh. My hand shook, but I did her bidding swiftly; and while I did so, big hot tears fell upon Boskie's coat, and I yearned unspeakably for my little white bed at home.

My uncle examined Star's foot and remounted. "Ride most cautiously," he said.

His tone seemed to seal our doom, so sad was it. My frightened heart went pit-a-pat, and every tree trunk loomed ghostly and grim.

But truly they were upon us before we thought. My uncle's horse whinnied and shied; and I, clinging to him in sheer terror, saw standing about us the threatening figures of the highwaymen.

Sooth, they were a bold, perilous gang to meet with in such a place.

"Let me pass! This is the king's highway," cried my uncle, stoutly braving them and pointing his pistols.

"What's your business?" asked the chief robber, who stood coolly facing them.

"That's as little to you as I would yours were to me," answered my uncle. "You see me here protecting my two women. And I will even do just that," he added. "Stand off and let us go."

"Can this be Jacob Foulke?" was asked.

"Jacob Foulke was to ride alone," said a voice. "We'll lose him aloitering here."

A low sob broke from me as I shrank behind my uncle. I thought of a surety my hour was come; and the idea was sore and new to me, being so softly bred. There was a burring sound of private talk about us.

"We must have your pelf and your ladies' jewels," said the robbers; "and then ride as you will. Will ye give up, or be searched?"

"You're a rascally scoundrel," cried my uncle, angrily. He clicked his pistol and moved his spurred boot restlessly across the horse's ribs. "Alas, Star hath no gait!" he muttered, looking to where my aunt sat motionless. She saw that we were surrounded by gleaming pistol mouths.

"Let them search us," she decided, laying a calming hand on my angry uncle.

Stout hands and many of them led us helter-skelter through brake and bramble to an open place, where gleamed a great fire of pitchy logs burning in the soft darkness; for the moon was setting. We were fain to

dismount, and 'twas with great disgust and disappointment that one robber called out, "These women be Quakers!"

"But what hath the little maid hugged tight there in the silk bag?" cried another.

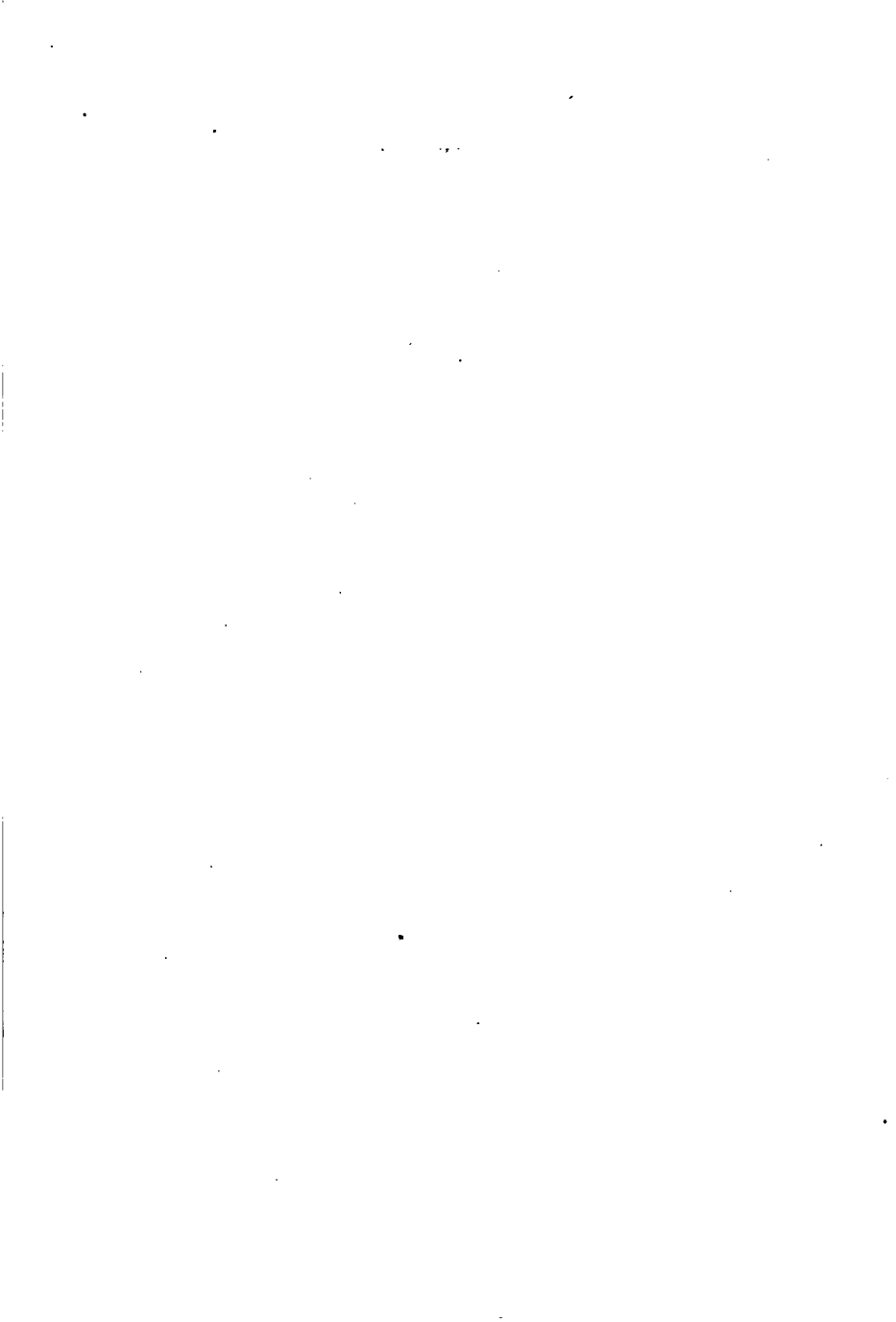
"So please you, sir, 'tis only my little dog, my little pet dog!" I pleaded, holding to him, and forgetting in the danger which threatened him the greater danger to my uncle's money. The man grasped him roughly by the skin; but Boskie did not bark, only cried most piteously. Then they flung him aside and turned the reticule inside out. They slit the fine stitched lining. See, here be the mended places. And then they fell to, on saddlebags and handboxes. There was a reckless turning out o' gear such as made my aunt Aurora wince, especially as she had with her the new bonnets, in the latest New York mode of fashion, fresh brought over by ship from London.

My uncle blanched and struggled when they pulled off his coat to search it. I can e'en see his white face yet, and the look in his eyes, when Aunt Aurora called to him in a ringing tone, "Brother, you must throw your coat into the fire!" And seeing him unwilling, what did my intrepid aunt, but dart under the ruffians' arms, — they grasping the coat loosely, for their great surety of it, — and seizing the garment fling it into the very heart of the blazing fire, where no one durst touch it. It burned bravely.

In the hubbub of rage which followed, she stood silent and unwavering, while my uncle said sadly, "Aurora, that was rash. I might have compromised."



"MY UNCLE BLANCHED AND STRUGGLED."



They took the new silver teapot bought for Aunt Hannah, and the bag o' silver bits.

"Mayhap th' maids ha' siller in their shoon," bawled a thick voice.

My aunt Aurora dropped instantly to the turf and, pulling off her shoes, flung them at him. They tore off the good silver buckles. Mine, too, they demanded; and I yielded them up reluctantly, being fond of what small toggery I possessed. But I managed to catch up Boskie and smuggle him into the reticule again.

At last one of the robbers called out, "Lads, let be! We ha' what plunder these Quaker folk ha' not burned up for us; they be a queer kind o' Quakers, too, that spend their fairin' in bonnet gear! But clear the way o' them. We ha' other work to-night."

Then they let us go, and scarcely could I breathe for the anxious throbbing of my heart as I felt my uncle's strong arm lift me to the saddle seat, with Boskie in the reticule, and the money safe!

My uncle spake not a word; but with a birchen withe (for the robbers had filched his riding whip) he urged the horses forward as well as he could, considering Star's lame foot. He glanced ever behind him, knowing too well that he was Jacob Foulke, and fearing pursuit, while my aunt Aurora's gaze strained to eastward, praying for the dawn.

Never was its rosy flush sweeter than when it crept at last over the eastern sea. 'Twas only then that we felt safe, and turning aside into the hamlet of Squan we sought its tavern. The inn was closely shuttered, and the inmates were wrapped in sleep. Stiff and ach-

ing, my aunt Aurora and I were lifted down to the square red bricks of the porch, while a sleepy hostler came blinking to take the horses.

I was faint and giddy as I leaned against a pillar, while my uncle began bitterly to bemoan his shortsightedness in taking the journey. "I have even lost all my moneys and brought thee through a dreadful night!" he exclaimed.

A smile broke over my aunt Aurora's face.

"Truly, thee might have fared sorely had thee left us behind, brother; for then surely they had known thee to be the Jacob Foulke whom they expected. And thee has naught to be angry for, that I flung that coat on the fire. 'Twas but the price of a coat. Thee looks surprised. And did thee truly think the money was burned? Nay, nay! Hannah, give me Boskie. See, brother, how useful a little dog may be! A little dog in a reticule!" and, laughing, she handed him the money.

The landlord, with candle and nightcap, came stumbling out to see who claimed his hospitality thus early.

"What! thou?" he cried, recognizing my uncle with astonishment. "So thou and thy women ha' rid safe through the robbers' wood, and at night! What mercy saved ye?"

"Partly," said my uncle, gravely, "this little dog, that traveled in a green silk reticule; and by your leave he'll take a sup o' milk and the best pickings of a bone."

And so the debt money was saved and paid, and later on I was more than happy with Gyp's seven puppies

cuddled in my lap. Boskie had the bonniest collar that could be found in all thè city of New York. But oh, he died long, long years since, my dear little Boskie; and this is all I have left of that gone time — this queer, faded old silk reticule.

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ANGELA OF ACADIA

I

THE *Sieur de la Fleur* was very old, and lame in the right knee. On this account, therefore, the *Sieur* might be seen twice every week, stumping along with his cane to the cottage of *Pierre Comeaux*. *Pierre Comeaux* was famous for his skill with herbs and simples; and in his little cottage garden grew many an herb familiar to the soil of Normandy, side by side with those whose curative virtues the old man had learned of the Indians in his new-world home.

Usually, when *Pierre* observed the *Sieur* coming, he called to *Michelle*, his housekeeper, or *Angela*, his granddaughter, to make ready the easiest chair upon the porch and to place there the little table with pipes and rare tobacco. Always there must be a pleasant chat with the *Sieur*, the knee gravely considered and prescribed for, and the affairs of the village talked over, before the *Sieur* departed with his liniment. At such times, when little *Angela* was not serving them, she was either spinning her flax or sorting herbs at a table in the great room; and much of their talk fell on eager, listening ears. The *Sieur* was of a fiery temper and hated the English, who were the lords of Acadia. Neither he nor old *Pierre*, nor hundreds of others in the peninsula,

had ever taken the oath of allegiance to the English king. Pierre, a no less devoted Frenchman, but one of more peaceful temper, constantly soothed and calmed his friend when he railed at English rule. For forty years they had lived under it, these two old men; and still they were unsubmitive.

Sometimes they talked over the tales and legends of Normandy; sometimes the talk ran on village gossip or crops; but through it and under it and over it ran ever the strain of bitterness, of unswerving defiance to that English oath. Of late Angela had heard a hopeful note: France and England were at war; France would surely conquer, and Acadia would come to her own again. But the little village of Pubnico, lying far to the west of the peninsula, was mindful chiefly of its own affairs and got its news of the outlying world but seldom.

On a memorable afternoon, the *Sieur* left early after a conversation more than usually bitter. Angela was in her garden working among her roses. Within, in his little laboratory, sat her grandfather, intent upon the careful compounding of a sweet ointment. Michelle, in the side meadow, was bleaching her linen. On a sudden, the afternoon stillness was broken by a sharp clatter of hoofs and the clanking of metal. It was a strange sound in little Pubnico. Angela stood upright among her roses and shaded her eyes with her hand; a redcoat officer came riding up, followed by two mounted orderlies. Both bore in their arms and across their saddles bundles of curious-looking weapons. As the officer raised his hat to the wondering little Angela, she saw in one of the bundles the chased hilt of the be-

loved sword which had been handed down for generations in the family of the *Sieur de la Fleur*.

The soldier asked for her grandfather and, when the old man hurried, trembling, to the gate, demanded of him all his arms. In the early days of Pubnico, when wild animals and hostile Indians prowled about the tiny settlement, Pierre had made good use of a gun. Now it hung in disuse upon its wooden pins above the house door, whence Michelle's stout arms dislodged it; and it also went to swell the bundle of weapons, already collected in the name of the king, by the order of Governor Lawrence.

"Why was that done?" questioned Angela.

"God knows," returned the old Pierre, with a sad and puzzled face; and he returned to finish the ointment.

Half an hour later the *Sieur* came stumping down the street. His old face worked with rage, and his voice quivered and broke with wrath, as he told how from every home in the village the arms had been demanded and obediently surrendered.

"'Tis the villainy of that man, Lawrence," he thundered. "Some evil is surely afoot."

But the old Pierre soothed and quieted: "'Tis likely a precaution lest we be invited to rebellion by the French in authority in Quebec. I would not fear; our lives are open and honest ones; they are in God's hands."

Then there came a day, a still, sweet day, with blue sky and sunshine, when through the little village there was a sad running to and fro, as the soldiers of the king again appeared with orders that the people should pack

up instantly, leave their homes and harvests and cattle as they stood, and journey thence to Piziquid. Alas, the sad hours until at length the few necessities were flung together, the ox cart laden, and down the road, away from the pretty cottage standing knee-deep in its blooming flowers, went Angela and Michelle and old Pierre.

Upon the way they overtook the *Sieur* and his house-keeper, Babette, with her man, Jean. The *Sieur* was sitting bolt upright, with dazed, unseeing eyes, and the rosy color of his face was turned to ashen gray. For once, not one word of all that strange doing was discussed by the two old men; for soldiers rode up and down beside that long procession of wagons moving slowly toward the shore.

It was nightfall when at length the tired people rode into Piziquid. The upper village was deserted. They passed farms and barns, one after another, deserted as theirs had been; the cattle lowed at the bars in vain, the horses whinnied in the stalls; no living soul was seen. But on the shore what a medley met their eyes!

The tide had run out and the great river, which at its flood was able to bear the hulks of seagoing ships, was now a channel of mud and water pools. A wild disorder lined its banks. All Piziquid was there — the householders of the Acadian farmers, dumb with amazement, camped in sorrow on its banks. Two boats had been freighted and had gone down with the tide that afternoon. In the morning ships would come up to take those who were left. The air was rent with

wailing and sobs; for families had not been removed together, but some members taken and others left.

To Angela's frightened gaze, the shore at first was Bedlam; then her eye caught, here and there, one or another whom she knew. She crept close to her grandfather and sought in vain to still Michelle's loud weep-



"ANGELA CLUNG TO HER GRANDFATHER'S HAND."

ing. Their oxen were turned adrift to wander wherever they might wish to go. Pierre built a little fire as the chilly night came on; beside this, all night long, he sat with the *Sieur de la Fleur*—two old souls, hand in hand, and speechless, as they realized that they were to be sent into exile from their broad acres and the land they

loved. Both were too old ever to think of return; to them it was forever.

In the gray dawn Angela sat, with strained eyes watching the tide run in; and later, the boats from the waiting ships came looming up from the distance.

The confusion was indescribable: there was hurrying, crying, calling; the rushing of soldiers hither and yon, driving the people to the waiting boats which were to carry them out to the ships. At length came their turn. There was a hurried rush. Angela clung to her grandfather's hand. But suddenly they were wrenched apart; she was flung into one boat, — one of the last to get in, — her grandfather into another, and the *Sieur* with him. As they pushed off, they saw Michelle weeping upon the shore.

Not until she stood alone upon the deck of the *Three Friends* did Angela realize that all she loved in this world were separated from her.

True, these Piziquid people were Acadians and would be kind to her. But whither was the ship bound? And who would give her a home in a strange land?

II

On a country highway leading out of the city of Philadelphia stood a quaint, gabled house. The lowest story was directly upon the street, the gables overhung it, and there was a wooden door in the center, flanked by two wide, small-paned windows, wherein one might discover rows of sweets, in jars with shining metal covers.

Within was a low-ceiled room with sanded floor and low counters; a pair of brass scales, standing on one of them, gleamed from much polishing and reflected sunlight; boxes and barrels stood about in tidy groups; and behind the counters there were well-furnished shelves. Whenever a customer opened the door of the shop, a small bell jingled sharply; and from a door behind the counter, with answering promptness, appeared sweet Mistress Folsom in her cap and kerchief, or the shop-keeper's apprentice, or Mr. Folsom himself, ready to serve customers. Mistress Folsom's particular line of service lay in the haberdashery line, of which the store had quite a department. Lying as it did upon the highway which led into the open country, it had a heavy rural trade on market days; and no one had such good taste, such winning sympathy, and such thrifty notions of measurements as Mistress Folsom.

Back of the shop was the sitting room of the family — an ample, cheery place, with its white-curtained windows and spindle furniture, its flowers, its hearth fire, and the dame's spinning wheel. But cheerier than all these was the toddling, golden-haired, mischievous family heir, Master Terence Folsom, aged one and a half years, never so happy as when clinging to his mother's skirts.

The burdens of keeping household order, presiding over dress stuffs, spinning flax and wool for family use, and keeping a sufficient surveillance of Master Terence were too heavy for the shoulders of Mistress Folsom. Hence it was that on a particular crisp morning in September, when Mr. Folsom announced that a frigate

from Southampton had arrived with merchandise, Mistress Folsom announced that she would desire him to bring to her a little serving-maid for Terence, one Mistress Wooster having given her an address, with certain good recommendations.

Holding this errand in mind, Mr. Folsom had discharged his duties concerning the merchandise and was coming up a narrow lane of the ship district, when a group of curiously clad people, timid, shrinking, and terrified, surrounding a king's officer, caught his eye. They, in turn, were partially surrounded by a ring of Philadelphians; and a lively conversation was in progress.

Mr. Folsom asked some questions and received quick answers. They were Acadian neutrals — French inhabitants of the English colony who, having been born there under French rule, refused to submit to the rule of England. Now, having been exiled to the loyal English province of Pennsylvania, they were to be bound out, as a means of teaching them submission.

Mr. Folsom scarcely questioned English justice; but being a man of generous heart, the sad, simple faces of that peasant group touched him. The newcomers were clinging timidly together — all but one.

That one was a slender, sad-faced maiden in kirtle and cap who, with downcast eyes, stood all alone. So delicate and slender was she, that the busy bargainers for labor all about her scarcely noticed her. Across the mind of Mr. Folsom flashed Mistress Folsom's need of a maid. He moved to Angela and lifted her face to view it.

Instantly she read in his own its kindness, and the terror in her eyes gave place to a rush of tears. The king's agent was glad to be rid of her, and Mr. Folsom was glad to take her.

When the shop bell tinkled and Mistress Folsom promptly stepped forth, her surprise at the sight of her new maid justified a smile from Mr. Folsom. He explained, and with his explanation shades of feeling passed rapidly over Mistress Folsom's face; they culminated in one look of burning indignation.

"Shame to the king!" she cried; "come here, you poor lamb! What outlandish shoes and clothes! Have you no kith nor kin? Poor lamb!"

She led Angela into the sitting room. There, in a patch of sunlight, sat Terence at his daily amusement of trying to catch sunbeams in his chubby little hands. When he saw Angela, he rose unsteadily to his feet and made straight for her with open arms, a very unusual performance for Terence, who heretofore had reserved such warmth wholly for his mother.

Over Angela's wan face crept its first smile for many a day. With a glad little cry she caught the baby in her arms; his head nestled in her neck; his tight embrace fairly choked her.

"Mind that, will you?" cried his amazed mother; "the child goes to her at once. When she's been bathed, and clothed in homespun, she'll be fairly pretty; her queer English will improve with us, and, with her to help me, I'll have a chance to breathe. Husband, I can see at a glance the lass is well born. I'll be bound she's better born than you or I, for all her strange gear.

I'm minded to let her live with us, as if she were, in a manner, kin."

Angela was meanwhile caressing Terence. The little



"WITH A GLAD LITTLE CRY SHE CAUGHT THE BABY IN HER ARMS."

heart, wearied to numbness by sorrow and cruel suffering, found its first consolation in Terence's baby love.

Mistress Folsom and her husband learned Angela's story, bit by bit, with deepest pity for her. She clung to the hope that she would hear yet of the whereabouts

of Pierre and Michelle. They, for their part, thought such hope quite useless. Many of the Acadians were brought to Philadelphia, but few of them stayed in the town proper. Farmers by birth, they went naturally into the outlying districts.

More than a year passed. Angela, healthy, and contented with her life, occasionally waited at the stuffs' counter in Mistress Folsom's place. Customers liked her sweet, accented English and her kindly ways. So it was that on a winter's morning Mistress Folsom, at her wheel, sent Angela into the shop when the bell tinkled. An instant later she heard a wild glad cry. Running to see what had happened, she found Angela wailing and weeping and pouring forth Acadian French in the arms of a stout, heavy woman, swathed in cloak, hood, and mittens. It was Michelle. She had become the wife of a prosperous farmer living a long distance from Philadelphia, whither she seldom came.

Good Pierre Comeaux and the *Sieur de la Fleur*? Ah, yes, Michelle knew well what had become of them. Her husband had sought out the captain of their ships; they had both died upon the voyage, unable, at their advanced years, to endure its fearful hardships.

The sea covered them and was more merciful than the land would have been. Angela accepted this news meekly; and her heart was at rest, since they were with the good God.

And now Michelle was offering her home to little Angela; would she not come to its shelter with her? Angela turned. In Mistress Folsom's eyes stood the tears; Terence clung to her skirt.

For an instant the eyes of the woman and the child searched each other's face; then Angela, with a little laugh and cry mingled together, wound her arms about Mistress Folsom's neck, and Mistress Folsom clasped her to her heart. Good Michelle understood.

A WITCH HUNT IN CONCORD

IN a green upland pasture three cows had been quietly grazing throughout the sweet spring day. Now they stood at the bars, switching their tails and gravely waiting. A flock of crows in the tree tops were settling, evidently for the night, uttering harsh, jarring cries to one another. Halfway up the lane which led to the pasture stood a tall, serious-faced lad with wide, frightened eyes. He was staring at the crows and repeating over and over again these words:—

“ By the silver cross,
And the holy nail,
Witch, avaunt thee,
Turn tail;
He rides with the Devil
Who rides with thee,
Out, witch, and set me free.”

Alexander kept his two forefingers crossed as he rattled over his rhyme; and presently, when the entire flock of crows save one flew, cawing, deeper into the wood, the tension of his face relaxed and he breathed a sigh of relief.

Then he fixed his glance upon the solitary bird that remained. For a few seconds the crow paused uncertainly, flitting from branch to branch. Again, in clear ringing tones, the strange rhyme startled the wood still-

ness. The crow at length winged a flight across the pasture and straight toward the stack of chimneys which marked a little farmhouse lying snugly in its circle of trees, a short way back from the old Boston road.

As soon as the crow disappeared from sight, Alexander let down the bars and followed the cows to the



"ALEXANDER KEPT HIS TWO FINGERS CROSSED AS HE RATTLED
OVER HIS RHYME."

barn. He turned them into the little milking paddock just as his mother appeared at the gate of the chicken yard; one hand held her apron bottom, bagged up into an ample pouch full of chicken corn.

"Alexander!" she called, in a smooth, soft voice, "come hither, son! Your father has gone into Concord town to ascertain the truth of the news that the regu-

lars are coming to Concord to destroy our powder stores. You must do his chores this night as well as your own."

"Yes, mother," returned Alexander, absently, "I'll call Patty to help with the milking."

The kitchen door at the side of the house stood half open, this mild spring evening of the eighteenth of April. Alexander paused before it an instant and looked in. Reaching upward to the dresser for a platter, stood a tiny, little old woman in spotless cap, beneath which peeped her white bobbing curls. Alexander caught his breath as he looked at her; he crossed his forefingers hastily and ran around the house corner to the front sitting-room door, which also stood half open. In front of the fire his sister Patty stepped back and forth before her large spinning wheel. She was short and sturdy in build; the rosy, healthy face, framed by the little cap, was wholesome-looking and modest.

To Alexander's request that she help with the milking she acceded willingly; and the two entered the paddock together, with their yokes and milking pails.

"Take Bess," said Alexander; "I'll milk Brindle and Croppit." The warm milk fell streaming into the pails, when — "Patty," called Alexander, softly, across the paddock yard, "how long has Aunt Hannah been in the kitchen?"

He suspended his work to wait for the answer.

"Only a very short time. She came in from her room upstairs just as I began a new hank of wool. What ails you, Alexander? The milk's flowing over the top of your pail. Take the other."

Alexander finished his milking in silence and came out

into the wagon yard, where Patty stood awaiting him. Over the upland wood the moon was rising; through the trees the kitchen firelight gleamed cheerfully; and from the distance came the steady rhythm of croaking frogs.

"Patty," whispered Alexander, "now I know of a surety that our dear Aunt Hannah is a witch."

Patty uttered a little cry, and her milk yoke fell from her shoulders.

"That cannot be, Alexander," she said sorrowfully.

"Ay, but it is so. It is even as Goody Mervin fears. You know Aunt Hannah's grandmother was burnt as a witch in Salem. 'Twas but half an hour ago I saw Aunt Hannah herself, with six other witches, in the pasture wood. They were in the shape of crows; I used the witch rhyme Goody Mervin taught me, and presently I saw Aunt Hannah fly homeward toward her room."

Patty turned very white; she clung to her brother. "It is a terrible thing to say, Alexander, a terrible thing. Bethink you, brother, may you not be wrong?"

"Perhaps, Patty. But Goody Mervin has told me many a witch tale, and I can see more signs whereby Aunt Hannah is a witch than to prove she is not. I must take Goody Mervin her pail of milk directly, and then I'll get her advice in the matter. Bide out of the house, Patty, till I come back."

They went to the milkhouse together, and Patty prepared the can of milk for Goody Mervin.

"Go, Alexander," she whispered, "and I will wait in the syringa bushes till you return. Oh, 'tis a fear-

some, fearsome thing to happen to us! Think of all the years Aunt Hannah has lived with us! And now, when she is an old, white-haired woman, the Devil has come and gripped her! I'll never believe she went over to him willingly; she's far too good and gentle for that — I believe he just came upon her from behind, and gripped her; the same as the witches would have gripped you to-night, had you not cast off their spell with your rhyme. I've noted how sad Aunt Hannah has been of late. Pray Goody to tell you a way to get the Devil to release her. I'll bed the horses while you are gone."

Alexander hurried down the main road, on which their house stood, to a little side lane branching from it. It was a narrow, lonely lane, very sweet this spring night with the odor of newly upturned earth, and musical with the song of the frogs.

To the left, under a lilac thicket, stood a low, brown house with a steep, pitched roof. A light in one of its window spaces gleamed out on the gray darkness like a red eye.

Alexander felt his way along a foot-beaten path to the front door. The lower half was closed, but the upper wing stood open, and looking over it into the room he saw Goody Mervin. She was stooping to fling billets of wood upon an already roaring fire. She was a strange little figure. From beneath a cap of almost monstrous proportions peered a thin, wizened little face, with sharp, ferretlike eyes. She was bent almost to a right angle with deformity, and a wig fell in a double row of false curls beneath her cap to her shoulders.

The room was in singular disorder; everything in it was scrupulously clean, but in a state of complete topsy-turvydom. Upon the top of a tall, mahogany dresser, with gleaming brass knobs which twinkled in the firelight, sat a large rag doll. This doll was Goody Mervin's chosen confidante and companion, and the only other inmate of the queer little home.

Alexander coughed softly to make his presence known. Goody turned about with a sharp, "Oh, 'tis you, Alexander. Come in, lad. Jane and I have been a bit lonesome, haven't we, Jane?" she said, addressing the rag doll; "I hear there's talk of a rising against the British. 'Tis time, too; 'tis time. But mark me, Alexander, — put the pail of milk on the table, lad, — 'twill be a war. Ay, 'twill be a war. You're a tall, well-grown lad, Alexander; belike you can crack a shot at them, eh, son? 'Twill be better than shooting partridge. What ails the lad this night?" she cried suddenly, taking a limping step forward and peering up into his face. "Your eyes are as solemn as a parson's. What's out with you, boy?"

Alexander poured forth his story. As Goody listened, she hung a kettle upon the crane and slowly stirred some porridge in it. Her little ferret eyes again and again sought Alexander's face with an anxious look. "Belike now, Alexander, you're oversure. 'Tis true I've seen witches in my day, and 'tis true Hannah's grandmother was burned for one at Salem; but before we can say to a certainty that Hannah's a witch, we must put it to the proof. If she's a witch, what you saw this night was a witches' cheery. They were

hobnobbing together to go off somewhere for a midnight ride. You must bide up till midnight and watch; at that time, if Hannah's a witch, she'll come out and bestride her broomstick. As she strides it, you'll hear her mutter:—

“Over the hills and far away,
To ride with the Devil, till break of day.”

Now before she can finish this and send the broomstick flying high into the air, you must grasp one end of the broom, and Patty the other. Say the witch-rhyme quickly, and the Devil will leave her. But if at midnight she's asleep in her bed, belike it was just crows you saw, Alexander, just crows.”

Alexander's face had grown very pale and set. Goody poured the milk into a jar, and he reached his hand for the empty pail.

“I'll bide up to watch her,” he said sadly; “'tis a sore thing to have one you love as we love Aunt Hannah witched by the Evil One. Patty and I will do our best to save her.”

He started down the pathway. “Tie a horseshoe to the broomstick,” the old woman called shrilly after him; but Alexander's long legs were already flying with him far down the lane.

The little homestead, glowing with fire and candle light, looked warm and friendly after the shadowy road. He ran up the orchard path to the kitchen door. Aunt Hannah, with a sweet and placid expression of face, was frying flapjacks over the fire. In the chimney nook sat his father cleaning a musket; his mother walked at her spinning wheel.

Patty crept up to him on the porch. With his arm about her, he drew her down into the shelter of the syringa bush beside the door and rapidly whispered his plan into her unwilling ears.

"I'm afraid of witches," she murmured, clinging to him; "no, no, I can't do it."

"Fie upon you, Patty! Will you let the Evil One keep dear Aunt Hannah because you are afraid?"

Patty was silent. Alexander shifted his attack.

"All right, Patty. Let us go in to supper. She does not deserve to be saved, for letting the Devil get hold of her."

"I'll do it," suddenly decided Patty; "I'll do it, Alexander; but oh, I am mortally afraid!"

Aunt Hannah appeared at this instant in the fireshine of the doorway.

"Come, children," called her cheery voice; "where are you dawdling? Supper is ready."

Alexander ate a hearty supper, but Patty scarcely touched her food.

The father sat unusually silent; the mother looked at him from time to time, her eyes filling with tears. After the meal the father and the mother again talked softly together, and Patty helped Aunt Hannah with her work. When, at length, the kindly old woman lighted Patty's bedroom candle and handed it to her, Patty, ashamed of her suspicions, took it and fled, without the usual goodnight kisses.

It was a warm night for the time of year. Setting the candlestick upon her dresser, she pushed back the window curtain and leaned out over the sill. The

peaceful country landscape was flooded with moonlight; the garden lay beneath her in a wonderland of light and shadow; in the distance the frogs still croaked.

As she turned over in her thoughts her part in the attempt to hinder Aunt Hannah's witch ride, her heart thumped so hard that Alexander's light knock upon the door sent it up into her throat with a bound.

He lifted her latch quietly; coming across the room, he drew Patty down beside him upon the window seat and unfolded his plan.

"A little before midnight I shall knock at your door. Rise and dress quickly. Then slip into Aunt Hannah's room and see if she be lying in her bed. I shall wait for you at the stair's foot. If she be there, roll a ball of yarn downward to me, and lay your length close along her doorsill, where she must assuredly tumble over you in coming out. I will then run outside and keep watch under her window; but if her bed be empty when you reach her room, Patty, hurry at once to me. We will wrap up warmly and sit in the arbor together and await her return. When she alights, we can seize the handle and brush of her broom, and I will say the witch-rhyme; in either case, we must save her."

Patty's cheeks were a feverish scarlet and her eyes unnaturally bright. The words again rushed to her lips, "Alexander, I cannot;" but she looked at his hopeful, earnest face, and they remained unspoken. He left the room, and she blew out her candle and went to bed. For a long time she lay trembling and listening to every sound. At length, a long time after she had lain down, she fell asleep. She was awakened by

a rude shaking of her shoulder and the light touch of a hand held over her lips. It was Alexander, none too pleased with her total obliviousness to his repeated knocks. "I'll be at the foot of the stairs," he whispered; "make haste."

She flung on her clothes and groped in terror along the hallway barred with misty moonlight shadows. Quaking and trembling with fear, she lifted the latch of the door, stole over to Aunt Hannah's bed, and put her hand upon it: it was empty.

Alexander, waiting for the ball of yarn, was startled to feel Patty fall into his arms instead; she was sobbing softly with relief, that she need not immediately face the Devil. Alexander, on the contrary, was greatly disappointed; he had nerved himself for a fine, hand-to-hand fight with the Evil One.

• Together they tiptoed into the garden and down its walks to the tea arbor, smelling sweetly from a surrounding thicket of boxwood. It was damp and chilly and very still. The moon had passed the zenith, and its pale light made every shadow sinister and ghostly. Now and then a rooster crowed shrilly from a barnyard, and another answered. Patty crept close to Alexander and, half dozing, leaned her head upon his shoulder. Half an hour of dismal, nervous waiting passed. Alexander kept his watch fixed upon the distant wood and the sky. It was in those directions that he looked for the return of Aunt Hannah.

Patty's drowsy eyes, fixed on the garden paths, suddenly became aware of something which caused her to clutch Alexander's arm and sit up, broad awake. "Oh,

look, brother," she whispered. She pointed down the garden way, where, at its very foot, beside a clump of quince bushes, the smokehouse stood. The winter meats had long since been cured and taken from its grimy depths; yet now a thin curl of smoke rose upward from its roof, and a line of red light, where the door stood ajar, denoted a fire within.

Alexander gasped and held Patty tight. "'Tis worse than I feared," he said; "'tis a witches' pot. They are in there, Patty, sitting about a caldron, brewing I know not what. See the light flare and flicker!"

Patty began to sob. "Let me go to mother," she cried. "I'm feared to my very soul, Alexander; I'll die if you take me yonder."

Alexander gently released her and started off alone down the garden path. In an instant Patty caught up to him and gripped tight hold of his arm. Her teeth were chattering with fright, but she said, "Nay, Alexander, you shall not go alone there to be witched. Tell me what to do."

They drew near to the smokehouse. Alexander paused and listened; a low murmur of voices came through the door. He left Patty under a quince bush and crept close; the murmur now became articulate sounds. Alexander placed his ear against a crack in the side of the house too narrow for the eye.

"You're a great help to me, Goody Mervin, and glad am I I sent for ye."

He experienced a sudden and terrible shock. Goody Mervin, then, was a witch also. With a flush of wrath



"NAY, ALEXANDER, YOU SHALL NOT GO ALONE THERE TO BE WITCHED."



upon his face born of the duplicity Goody Mervin had practiced upon him, he made one stride to the door, intending to jerk it open; hesitating, he first peeped in.

Over a lively fire, crackling and glowing, bent the figures of Goody Mervin and Aunt Hannah. A pot of liquid bubbled over it. Goody Mervin held in her hand a long-handled ladle, out of which she poured a thick, grayish-looking mass into a receptacle steadied by Aunt Hannah.

"Alexander usually makes his father's bullets," continued Aunt Hannah's sweet old voice, "and I do not know much of the process; therefore I sent for ye, Goody Mervin. I want the lad and his father to go with well-filled pouches when the time comes; and I think with yourself 'tis very near."

The wrath in Alexander's face gave place to a look of shame, of chagrin; and then a deep relief swept all else before it. He was about turning back to Patty, when Patty, who had been watching him with growing fear and anguish from her place under the quince bush, now rushed up and with wild hands pulled and hauled him from the door, crying, "Come away, Alexander; they're witching you, they're witching you!"

Alexander was both surprised and alarmed at the sudden onslaught. He lost his balance and fell up against the smokehouse door, and both children tumbled headlong into the place. The old dames were thoroughly frightened; and a combined wail rent the night air, while the hot drops from the mold spilled and hissed in the fire. Patty clung with violent sobs to Aunt Hannah, imploring her to say that she was not a

witch; and Aunt Hannah, with a succession of pats, administered partly to soothe and partly to punish her, assured her rather tartly that she was nothing of the sort.

Alexander faced Goody Mervin. She lifted shamed eyes to his indignant, scornful glance, reading there that his faith in her had been suddenly swept away. In so humble a voice that he was completely disarmed and forgave her instantly, she said, "It was a mistake, Alexander, and a wrong to that good, faithful woman. I have confessed the whole story to her, and she has forgiven me. Can't you do the like?"

Alexander glanced sheepishly at Patty. Under Aunt Hannah's soothing, convincing jerks all her witch terrors had subsided; and she now threw a look of hearty scorn at her brother.

"Muddlepate!" she said. Turning coldly away from him, she kilted up her skirts and prepared to assist at the bullet-making.

A half hour flew by unheeded. When Alexander's ready skill was applied to the manufacture of bullets, the work sped along. As Patty stepped forth into the open air with a mold of cooled bullets, the moonlight was waning.

A sound caught her ear — the far-away, rhythmic, steady beat of a horse's hoofs. It arose from the direction of Lexington; and as she paused to listen, a rider came into sight, spurring his horse and fairly flying past bushes and trees through the quiet night. Her father's casement rattled open; there was a call and a reply; and away sped rider and horse in the direction of the town. Patty understood the message well; it

came from Boston; the British were coming to Concord; there would be a fight. Fear again leapt into her eyes and stirred her heart to heavy throbbing. She knew that her father and Alexander would take up arms; they were minutemen. Tears dimmed her eyes as she knelt and mechanically sorted the bullets; then with a brave face she reëntered the smokehouse. The women were busy at their talk and had heard neither horseman nor message. Patty did not tell them; she knew that but one word would send Alexander flying for his musket and shot bag, and for a few moments longer she wanted him there beside her, as he had always been.

And then, in another way, the message came to them all. "Hark!" cried Goody Mervin, "a sound!" They listened. Through the deep stillness of the early dawn, steady, mournful, insistent, rang out the Concord church bell. It was the call to the minutemen.

Alexander rose to his feet; his face blanched for an instant; like Patty, his first thought was not for himself — his was for his mother. Then to the boyish face came suddenly that look of final resolution, of splendid courage, which armed many a minuteman rushing from the plow to the fight with a valor more irresistible than the strength of the British arms.

Goody and Aunt Hannah hurried to the house. Alexander started to follow.

"Are you going?" faltered Patty, detaining him.

"Aye, I'm going," he replied sturdily.

"Then let me clean your flintlock," she said, and fled up the garden path to hide her welling tears.

By candlelight there was a hurried breakfast. After it the father, not as usual opening the Bible, stood by the fireplace, musket in hand, and repeated in his sonorous tones the Twenty-third Psalm. They all knelt and said the Lord's Prayer together. Patty and the mother, clinging to each other, felt all the terrors of the Valley of the Shadow of Death for these dear ones going forth to enter it. There were quick, silent embraces; and down the road, shoulder to shoulder, side by side, went father and son to the meeting place of the minutemen.

Patty watched them out of sight. Her eyes burned with sleeplessness and weeping. She reëntered the sitting room. Beside the fire, by her father's chair, her mother knelt in prayer. Patty knew that she would wish to be alone, and with light steps she stole into the kitchen. Aunt Hannah and Goody Mervin were collecting the family valuables, preparatory to hiding them away from the eyes of marauding soldiery.

Patty and soon the mother also joined them in this task. The soft light of early morning fell upon the scene; birds sung and twittered in the orchard trees. As Patty came down the garret stairs, their big Cochin China rooster stepped up to the doorsill and sent forth a lusty crow. She laughed in spite of herself.

"Poor old Billy Bill," she said; "mother has clean forgotten your flock; and the cows are still in the paddock." She caught up the bag of corn and ran to do the chores.

Up the little lane she drove the cows, just as the rising sunbeams fell over the land, on that morning of

the nineteenth of April. Patty had put up the bars and turned to descend the hill, when her ears caught a sound; the roll of the drum and the shrill squeak of fifing mingled together across the sharp morning air, and the redcoats appeared in sight, coming over the brow of a hill.

She flew downward to the house and sought her mother in the sitting room.

On came the heavy tramp of soldier feet and the insolent rhythm of fife and drum, to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*.

Patty peeped through the honeysuckle vine. Far up the road gleamed a mass of red, moving steadily from clump to clump of wayside thickets, nearer and nearer. Past the gateway they swung, proud and confident; and still they were coming over the hill.

She thought swiftly of her father and Alexander and the little untrained band of Concord farmers; what strength or knowledge had they to resist this glittering British phalanx of eight hundred well-armed regulars? The last file marched by, leaving only a cloud of dust behind them. But from the instant when Major Pitcairn on his prancing horse had passed their lilac bush, to that when the last line of dapper red jackets filed by, a light had leaped into Patty's eyes, and a prayer unphrased had risen in her heart — no longer for her father's and her brother's safety; it was the first heart throb for her country — a prayer that the men in the town might win, even against such awful odds.

Colonel Barrett had ordered the militia to retire from the advance of the regulars, over the North Bridge to

Punkatasset Hill, a mile and a half from Concord center. As they reached the hill, a column of the enemy was seen advancing from the village.

There on the hill, among the minutemen, Alexander leaned against a tree, and with quickened heart and tight-set lips impatiently waited the orders for action. At length Colonel Barrett came riding up; an attack was decided upon. The little patriot band received the command to march to North Bridge and pass it, but not to fire on the king's troops unless the latter fired upon them. They set off, marching in double file, with trailed arms, Alexander beside his father.

The British retreated across the bridge and began to pull up its planks as the minutemen came into the river road. Their leader shouted to them to desist, and hastened the march of his men. When the head of the American column had almost reached the turn where the road led toward the bridge, there was a sharp crack, and a rifle shot came singing through the air over Alexander's head and lodged itself in a tree.

He paled for an instant and then looked up into his father's face with a quick, brave smile. Several other shots followed, wounding no one. At length there came a discharge that felled three of their men. When their leader saw them fall, he cried in a ringing tone, "Fire, fellow-soldiers! For God's sake, fire!"

Alexander, with the blood rushing to his head, dropped to his knee and took aim; and his shot sped with the others of that first American volley, across the quiet river and into the ranks of the regulars. Several red-coats fell. Then the heat of battle fired the Americans,

and for a few moments the rain of their bullets cut the April air.

The British fell back from the bridge; they began to retreat toward the town. The Americans crossed the bridge, but did not follow the flying British line.

Patty had spent the morning at her spinning, and bad, bungling spinning it had proved. The father's last words were that on no account should the women leave the house. The hours had dragged by, and no news of any sort had come to them of what was occurring in the village.

A little after noon, as she ran to the gate of the garden to strain her eyes down the sunlit road in the hope of seeing a messenger, Patty heard the faint, sharp rattle of musketry and the echoes of the grim conflict at Merriam's Corner. Later the British came up the road, no longer in spruce, regular lines, with insolent high looks. They came now in broken, weary files, covered with dust and powder, grumbling, stumbling, some swearing; and Patty fled in terror to the house. The place was unmolested, as the retreating ranks came by, save that one redcoat, tired and disheveled, unlatched their gate and strode toward the well for a drink of water.

He was a kindly-looking, blue-eyed boy of perhaps two and twenty, and his condition was piteous; when he reached the well-curb, he found neither cup nor bucket.

Without a word he was turning toward the road again, when Aunt Hannah hurried out to him with a brimming bowl of cool water and a hunch of good bread.

"Here, poor lad," she said briefly, "eat and drink.

Our lad's in the opposite ranks, but we're all human." The soldier thanked her, drained the cup of water, took the bread, and passed on.

Later in the afternoon, as Patty was again at her spinning, a shadow fell across the doorway, and Alexander stood before her. He was covered with dust, grimed with powder; his eyes were dark-circled and tired; but in them lay a new look, a new thought, and a joy which is the joy of a soldier who has won his first victory. Patty sprang to him, but he caught and held her from him, laughing. "Nay," he said, "don't come nigh me till I'm cleaned. Get me a bowl of bread and milk, Patty, and some water to wash in. God be thanked, dear, the redcoats know at last that we do not fear them. 'Twas their doing; they fired first."

There was a happy bustling in the old kitchen; Patty and the mother laid out clean clothing and a bountiful supply of soap and water for their heroes returned; Aunt Hannah stirred and cooked flapjacks. Over and over, father and son recounted the events of the day. The sun slipped, unheeded, low into the west.

At length Patty pulled down her green calash from its nail and prepared to start for the cow pasture. "Nay, nay," she said, refusing Alexander's offer to go; "the milking is for father and you to-night. I'll bring the cows. But tell me, Alexander," she continued mischievously, dallying in the doorway, "what shall I say if I see the crows? I do not know your rhyme."

"Say," he replied, "that the little fool who spit rhymes at them last eventide spit bullets to-day at certain red crows in the neighborhood, and to a much better purpose."

THE SILVER WEDDING OF UNCLE GIDEON

WHEN Aunt Tabitha Cushing decided to celebrate her silver wedding in an appropriate fashion, she wrote all the invitations to the many members of the family before she broke the news to Uncle Gideon. The question of messengers to carry these biddings to the various Cushing and Hooper relatives — Aunt Tabitha was a Hooper — who lived in and outside of Philadelphia, compelled her to seek Uncle Gideon; he was at the far end of the garden, thinning a bed of poppies.

It was upon a Friday, in the cool of the evening of the seventh day of June, 1776, that Aunt Tabitha in stately fashion marched down the garden paths to the place where Uncle Gideon in his shirt sleeves bent over his flowers.

She at once set forth, in an elaborate speech, a review of their happy married life, their early poverty, their present wealth, and her desire, since the Lord had given them no children, to gather about them, upon this coming twenty-fifth anniversary of their wedding day, all their near relatives with their children and children's children. Aunt Tabitha had a certain slow manner and a precision of speech upon which she prided herself.

Uncle Gideon stood upright and heard her out with respect; his handsome face was troubled.

"Good wife," he said absently, "and what day have you set for this rejoicing?"

"Mercy to us," cried Aunt Tabitha, impatiently and in quite another voice; "gather your wits together, Gideon Cushing! Do you forget the date of your own wedding, the eighth day of July, 1751?"

"No, dear wife," he returned, "but my thoughts are very busy. The Congress is to-day debating a most serious question, and if it be passed —"

"Ever and ever politics," wailed Aunt Tabitha. "The king is good enough for me. To have everything from London in latest fashion and mode is far better than this senseless rampaging to flout his Majesty's will. You will see; we shall be whipped for our sauciness like a parcel of children."

Uncle Gideon's sweet look clouded under Aunt Tabitha's foolish words. 'Twas the one point whereon they disagreed; she was a hearty lover of royalty and a loyal, unreasoning adherent to ancient customs, after the manner of her up-bringing. Uncle Gideon, one of the foremost citizens of Philadelphia, was heart and soul with the spirit of his day, which opposed the tyranny of the king and looked toward independence. The celebration of his own silver wedding was a trifle to him, compared with that burning question as to whether the Congress, now sitting, would definitely sever the relations of the colonies with England.

"You may have your celebration," he said gently; "what can I do for its furtherance?"

Thereupon Aunt Tabitha launched forth upon missives and messengers, and by what posts, or by what

riders her invitations should be sent. It was here that I, Hiram Cushing, aged seventeen, was summoned to rise from my knees, where I had been silently pulling poppies, to receive my delegation as messenger to the home of my name-uncle, Hiram Cushing. He lived upon a broad farmstead, many miles distant from Philadelphia. My own father had died in London; my mother still lived there; but I, at my father's death, had been sent to my uncle Gideon and by him most carefully reared.

To carry so gay a message to so desirable a place as my Uncle Hiram's made me flush with pleasure. My Aunt Tabitha's home was large and commodious, a noble mansion lying white, formal, and austere in a riotous, blooming garden of several acres. The house was all Aunt Tabitha; the garden all Uncle Gideon. The stiff and stately formalities of my aunt's house tired me greatly. But to go to Brownmede, where lived a host of lads and lassies, the children of my dear Uncle Hiram and Aunt Agatha, where lived Grandfather Cushing, where trilled the gay laughter of saucy Cousin Betsey —

"When shall I set forth?" I demanded eagerly.

And Uncle Gideon with a quiet smile answered, "This day week."

I thought the day would never arrive. Aunt Tabitha kept me, as well as every one about her, fetching and carrying for her; the great house, soon to be overrun with guests, must be swept and garnished from the cupola to the porch stairs and the mounting blocks. I was weary of it all. Uncle Gideon was but little at home.

At length the day came. My uncle, being absent on business at the Philosophical Society, left word that I might select my own horse and gear and stop to take leave of him as I came by the State House. I selected a saddle with a pillion, whereupon Humphrey, the old servant who was to accompany me, smiled.

When at last I had my aunt's sealed letters in my jacket pocket and had received her last instructions and her little peck of a kiss upon my forehead, I clattered smartly down the avenue and set my face toward Brownmede. There was but the halt to take leave of my uncle, and then for a canter through lane and highway!

I rode down toward the State House. The old bell in the tower clanged the hour of nine. Riding up to the entrance of the State House Yard, I threw rein to Humphrey and ran across the great square, radiant this morning with sunshine, its sweet silence broken here and there by a bird note dropping from the leafage of the trees. Near the observatory, beneath its little balcony, I saw my uncle among a group of several other gentlemen. At sight of him I broke from my gallop of haste into a respectful pace, and then, hat in hand, awaited his advance as he came forward to meet me.

He offered kindly words of advice and instruction and said finally: "Tell your grandfather that, if he be able, I desire him to undertake this journey; not to be present at your Aunt Tabitha's silver wedding so much as to see at my side the great deliverance which is surely coming to the colonies. Within there, lad, they

are framing our Declaration of Independence. Say to my father that I desire greatly his future counsels." With these words and a kiss upon my forehead, he let me go.

We lay that night at a little tavern in the village of North Wales. Early next morning we were in the saddle, and by six o'clock in the afternoon I saw the gables and chimney stacks of Brownmede. The sight of the old house-place, surrounded by its familiar willows, the group of barns, the broad cattle paddocks, the homely clatter of hens, ducks, and geese, set my heart fairly bumping with joy. I flung myself from the saddle, gave the horse to Humphrey, and ran eagerly to the east garden, where, among lilies and hollyhocks, I knew I should find Aunt Agatha and the lassies drinking tea.

To be sure, there they were, — Betsey, Patty, and Jean, — with dear Aunt Agatha, who, when she saw me, gave a cry and folded me to her heart with kiss upon kiss of warm welcome, demanding the while, "Is aught amiss in Philadelphia?"

"La, now," laughed Betsey, dancing about me as I delivered Aunt's packet, "you are grown a great gallant, sweet Cousin Firefly. You make me fear you, you do indeed, with your stately looks;" and to prove it she saucily pulled my nose.

"Let him be," said sober Jean. "You'd tease the king's officer, Bess. Is't good news, Patty?"

Patty, upon a stool, was reading Aunt Tabitha's letter over her mother's shoulder. Evidently, from her impatient frown, there was a long preamble. But at length the point was reached; for with a squeal of

delight, she suddenly jumped from the bench, caught up her skirts, and fell to dancing such a jig as made her ringlets bob jauntily.

"Tell us, mother," cried the other two; and with the bidding to the silver wedding, the actual prospect of a trip to Philadelphia, came such tempestuous rejoicing that none of us heard the thud of a cane till our grandfather stood in our midst. The lassies ducked hasty curtsseys; I fell on one knee and reverently kissed his hand.

"Lad," he said in a gentle, sweet voice, "I bid thee welcome. Thou comest no doubt with word from son Gideon to me. A message from daughter-in-law Tabitha hath already been delivered, as witnesseth this mad prancing. Come, lad, my son Gideon knows his father's heart. What message sent he to me?"

I delivered it most carefully and deliberately. Grandfather's faded blue eyes kindled, and then swam with tears.

"I am too old," he said, "to offer my own life for my country; but if I could give it, lad, I would this day most sincerely thank God."

We two stood by the old sundial. The last shadow of a vanishing day lay upon it. The laughter of the chattering lassies rang in my ears; then it receded and I noticed it no longer, but fixed my gaze upon a tall lily which grew over the foot of the dial; and with Grandfather's hand upon my shoulder then too vanished the last hour of a care-free, heedless youth. My thoughts henceforth belonged to his thoughts and Uncle Gideon's and Uncle Hiram's.

My Uncle Hiram and his tall sons, my cousins Joshua, Laban, and Dennis, came in from the fields a little later and greeted me warmly. In the dining room, with its long, open casement, into which the hollyhocks peeped, the table was laid for the supper. A light fire of splinters sputtered on the hearth; and before it, lads and men, we held earnest converse as to the situation in Philadelphia.

In the adjacent sitting room the women had pushed spinning wheels aside, and there was a scurrying to and fro, upstairs and down. Press lids were hastily slammed; hand-boxes, gayly flowered, with yawning tops, occupied the center of the room; and a babel of talk as to women's fuss and feathers for Aunt Tabitha's party put every other concern out of sight. It was a momentous occasion.



"WE TWO STOOD BY THE OLD
SUNDIAL."

I slept that night in a long, low, white-washed room, where in a row, with wide-curtained windows between, and roses peeping in, stood the narrow beds of my cousins. All our talk was of the colonies' independence; and all our hope that we might fight to maintain it, once it should be declared.

Two weeks slipped by at Brownmede. Lying as it

did at a considerable distance from the highway, scant news of any sort reached us. I went with my cousins about their daily tasks, while Aunt Agatha and the lassies transformed the sober house into a regular Vanity Fair. There were, too, long hours of that fortnight spent with my grandfather, while he recounted stories



"BETSEY RODE UPON MY PILLION."

of his early fights with Indians and of Pennsylvania's resistance to the oppression of England in earlier days, when our liberties and rights were threatened.

At length came the day of departure for Philadelphia, and our cavalcade was ready. Betsey rode upon my pillion; and a gay and sorry time her mischievous pranks led me, albeit I was more glad than not to have her company. Late of a Sunday afternoon we

soberly entered Philadelphia, and in the gray of the twilight we rode through its quiet streets to the gates of my uncle's residence. Grandfather entered first; next came Uncle Hiram with Aunt Agatha; and then the medley group of us lads and lassies, governed by Humphrey.

My Aunt Tabitha, stiff in brocaded silk and rich laces, came forward with my Uncle Gideon to receive us; to Grandfather she made a low and stately curtsy. He, with Uncle Gideon and Uncle Hiram, after greeting her suitably, hurried into the house.

We lads fairly pulled the lassies from the saddles; our horses disappeared in the direction of the stables. The great house glowed with candles and rustled with guests; Aunt Tabitha cordially received Aunt Agatha and the lassies. Joshua, Laban, and Dennis stood near me; tall, well-knit, and sturdy lads though they were, they appeared a trifle awkward here, for they were not accustomed to Aunt Tabitha's perfumed elegance.

"Come," cried I, and led the way. I strode down the hallway and stopped outside the great mahogany door which opened into Uncle Gideon's suite of offices. Within we heard a low, earnest sound of voices, and straightway I rapped.

My Uncle Gideon opened to us; his face was shining and cheerful. "Enter," he cried heartily; "lads, they've done it! 'Twas done on the fourth day of this month! You will hear it publicly proclaimed to-morrow. Congress has passed the Declaration of Independence! The colonies have thrown over the king! To-morrow, to-morrow, by the grace of God,

you shall hear read, in the State House Yard, that blessed document which proclaims our rights and frees our soil from oppression."

"Halt, son," cried grandfather. "England will contest that. His Majesty will scorn our declaration. There will be war in this land, and God give the right the might to triumph."

"War," broke in Uncle Hiram; "who expected aught else? As they have tried to crush Boston, they will try to crush the whole land; and the whole land will fight their armies and drive them back to their own shores. These shores are ours. Thank God, we've had the courage to declare what we are — a free people and a nation."

My Aunt Tabitha suddenly appeared in the doorway and cut short Uncle Hiram's oratory. "Craving your pardon, gentlemen. Gideon, Abijah Hooper with his family is coming. Will you receive them?" My uncle hurried away.

The stillness of that Sunday evening was made very memorable to the crowd of lads and lassies, kith or kin, who sat about the rooms in decorous silence, whispering to one another of the events of the morrow and welcoming the bedroom candles as a relief from very certain oppression.

The eighth day of July, 1776, broke clear and sweet — a warm, sunshiny morning.

Breakfast was over; near-by relatives came in shoals to the house; in the gardens the servants were putting up the great tent for the masque; and the hired mummers had unpacked their boxes, peeped at curiously

by a wondering crowd of merry-making lads and lassies.

My aunt dispensed hospitality to all with a gracious hand and made things vastly agreeable for the woman-kind; but the men, and there were many of them, sat in a close group on the south porch, talking for the most part in a fashion unusually earnest for a wedding celebration.

At half-past ten my uncle rose and sought Aunt Tabitha. They were closeted some ten minutes; and as they came from his office together, her face showed traces of tears.

"Hiram," said he, "assemble your cousins; for I have decided that I with my guests shall attend in a body the reading of the Declaration. This shall be my share of the celebration of my silver wedding; the pole twining and mummeries can wait till later."

I ran gladly to do his bidding, and in a short time away streamed the entire silver wedding train to the State House Yard. A vast concourse of people also was streaming thither. They came from every direction; they were of every class.

Before twelve o'clock a solid mass of waiting citizens filled the great space of the State House Yard. I had difficulty, with my cousin Betsey on my arm, to maintain a place.

Presently, as when a lull comes in a rustling wind, the hum of voices ceased. A man was stepping forth upon the little balcony of the observatory; he was John Nixon, the friend of my Uncle Gideon.

As he stood there, holding in his hands the document

of the Declaration, the silence of the waiting throng could be felt. His voice, clear, resonant, and searching, was so distinct, when he began to read, as to be plainly heard on the opposite side of Fifth Street.

“When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which compel them to the separation.”

There was a pause, and the speaker looked steadfastly out over the sea of faces ere he took up, one by one, those noble sentences, nobly framed, by which we threw down the gauntlet for a nation’s freedom; then he went on. My heart caught fire as he read; a lump rose in my throat; and I am not ashamed to say that the tears dimmed my eyes as I grasped with swift sympathy those eloquent arguments, reaching at length to that climax:—

“That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things, which independent states may of right do. And, for the support of this Declaration, with a

firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.' ”

The reader's voice fell with the last word. Then upon the air burst a ringing cheer from a thousand throats — another, another, another — wave on wave. The State House bell pealed merrily; the bells of Christ Church broke into a chime.

The people began to move, shouting, laughing, some dancing, but many more gravely shaking hands. On faces with the tears scarcely dry, laughter now shone. Several men ran to the center of the square bearing fagots. A fire was kindled, and with roaring and rollicking, the great coat of arms of King George III of England, which had had place over the judge's seat, was brought forth with mock solemnity and hurled into the heart of the blaze. The crowd joined hands and danced in howling circles around the bonfire. I looked about for our people; and finding them gone, Betsey and I left the square and hurried home.

My aunt, with a bevy of sympathetic relatives, had retired to her room to indulge in hysterics and smelling salts. Good Aunt Agatha had assumed the duties of hostess and was dispensing lunch. Uncle Gideon, happier than I had ever before seen him, went about asking every one to congratulate him upon the successful celebration of his silver wedding. Then, his heart accusing him for the disappointment of Aunt Tabitha, he gave orders that her festival should go forward, which it did right merrily to that lady's ultimate satisfaction.

In gala dress we had the garden masque. As it was finished, and a tea drinking and a merry promenade about the garden began, to while away the time between the stately dinner and statelier evening cotillon, again I listened to the ringing of the State House bell.

I was with Dennis. We looked into each other's faces for an instant, and then ran with one accord to doff our gay coats; and away we flew to the square to hear the proclamation made to the troops. Many a man who wore the red coat of England that day tore it off gladly at the call.

'Twas then my heart took fire. I had a country. The soil upon which I trod, the air which I breathed, my beloved home, were no longer English bound; they were my own, a part of my country. I was a subject no longer. I was a citizen; and then and there, I vowed to enter the army of my land.

I whispered my resolve to Dennis. He squeezed my hand and whispered back the same determination. On our homeward way we met Joshua and Laban. They too had heard the proclamation and were determined to go. Into my Uncle Gideon's gate we marched, heads up, hearts aflame to become the defenders of a new nation.

Grandfather was walking up and down a rose alley, in meditation, his cane thumping the gravel. He saw us coming. It was early twilight, with a gray-blue evening sky and one bright star.

"Lads," he called to us, "come hither! I know where you have been! Speak, Joshua, what's at your heart?"

Joshua spoke of our joint determination. His words,

struggling with emotion, trembled with the newborn patriotism of young blood.

Grandfather brought down his cane with a sounding thud and cried: "What care I now that my old heart is shriveled! Here be four hearts which carry my blood to do great things for my country! Now, lads, go dance and be gay. Carry a high resolve, with a bright face and merry heels. 'Tis the life of a young man."

My Aunt Tabitha's silver-wedding dance was a memorable one for me. Very sweet the music was, very gay the dancing. On the lawn, at ten o'clock, fireworks were set off. Uncle Gideon and I met among our flower beds. "Lad," said he, "Aunt Tabitha hath had her wish to-day, and I" — he paused and looked up to the sky full of stars — "I've had mine; I am a citizen of a free country."

LAETITIA AND THE REDCOATS

DAME WRIGHT had just taken the last loaves from the oven and was dusting off some ashes from the wooden bread shovel before she replaced it in its corner. Clear spring sunlight streamed into the kitchen, warming the stone floor to a deep brown color, and touching the mugs and platters on the dresser till they fairly winked back its brightness. A robin outside was whistling gayly, and a long branch of lilac buds peeped in at the wide-swung upper door, as if desirous of finishing its career in the blue-and-gold pitcher which stood on the dresser, even before it had attained to bloom on its own native bush. A patter of flying feet sounded outside, and the lower door was flung hastily open, revealing a little figure in a long, blue cloak, the hood of which, fallen back, discovered a head of short-cropped, curly hair. Laetitia's eyes were dilated with surprise and terror, and before the astonished dame could comment on her disheveled appearance, she gasped out:—

“Oh, grandmother, the British are crossing Orange Valley, and Master Paxton saith they will camp here at nightfall! He saith thou and grandfather must hasten to depart at once. Thou shalt have two of his horses, and accompany him to the huts on the mountain side!”

“Neighbor Paxton is a kindly man. Calm thyself,

Laetitia. When thou hast thy breath, run to the mill, child, and bid thy grandfather come. Alas! for these troublous times when the aged and children flee before the march of strong men!"

With a sad, anxious face, she began instant preparations, while Laetitia, hurriedly pulling her hood over her curls, sped down the path toward the mill. She met her grandfather coming homeward. He was old, feeble, and bent, clad in homespun.

"Laetitia," he said, as she trotted along at his side, "vex not thy grandmother this day with foolish terrors, but lend thy help like the willing little handmaiden that thou art, and remember that all things come from the hand of the Lord."

Laetitia glanced up at his face.

"But will not the redcoats spoil the house of goods and furniture, perhaps burn thy dear home, grandfather, and thou an old man without sons — and grandmother, too, so old?"

"I know not, my daughter. So far, the Lord hath spared my gray hairs, though this war hath taken the five boys, my five brave lads!" His voice shook. "But thou must be brave, Laetitia. Thou art our one ewe lamb."

"I will then, grandfather. Not another tear will I shed."

They entered the yard, bright with violet-sprinkled grass, and found Dame Wright busily packing what she could into secret places, and piling up household treasures for burial in the woods. Laetitia flitted hither and yon all day, her nimble little feet and clever

head saving the old people much worry and fatigue. She was kneeling in a roomy closet upstairs, searching out her grandmother's camlet cloak, when her bright eyes fell on her grandfather's inkhorn and quill pen lying on some deep blue paper. As she had gone about from room to room, up and down the old house, more and more the fear had grown upon her that it was for the last time. The thought of her grandparents homeless and desolate, of rough soldiers clanking about the house with devastating hands, filled the soft eyes with tears and caused her heart to throb. The ink and paper were a suggestion. She ran downstairs with the cloak, and finding that neither grandfather nor grandmother needed her at that instant, she returned to the closet and carefully prepared her writing materials.

The quill was new and the ink good. Slowly and thoughtfully the little fingers guided the goosefeather along the faint lines, first across one sheet, and then across another. When the task was finished, Laetitia raised her flushed face and surveyed the result with satisfaction ; and no small degree of hope shone in her eyes. The letter ran : —

"TO THE REDCOATS: I am Laetitia Wright, aged fourteen, who live in this house with my grandparents. They are old and feeble folk, gentle and peaceful to friend and foe. I pray you, dear Redcoats, spare their home to them, and do not burn nor ruin our house. Perhaps thou hast a little maid like me in England, and old parents. Thou couldst not burn the roof from over their heads, and in such pity and mercy, spare ours ! We leave thee much to eat, and would leave thee more, were our store larger. Signed,

"LAETITIA WRIGHT."

This was neatly written on both papers, and Laetitia, tucking them into her pocket, slipped off to her duties with a lighter heart. The last preparations were soon made, and they started to join the little cavalcade already in line to travel up the side of Orange Mountain to the log huts built there in readiness for such invasions as this.

"Alas, my geese!" exclaimed Laetitia, when with tearful eyes they had turned their backs on the low, white house. "My geese are still in the pen, grandmother! Let me hasten back and turn them loose."

Permission was given her, and away she darted across the brook, on its rough foot log, to the goose pen. There were her snow-white geese and the gray gander. They were Laetitia's particular pride and care and knew her well; but, only stopping to stroke one smooth back, she opened the wicket and drove them, honking and hissing, into the woods. Then she pulled the papers from her pocket; and hastily slipping one below the kitchen door, she fastened the other on the front-door knocker. Then she rejoined her grandparents and was soon mounted behind her grandfather in the little procession, which wound slowly up the rough mountain road to shelter and safety.

At sunset the British, pushing across New Jersey, reached the village, and though but a small detachment, they proceeded to occupy every available building. The peaceful quiet and exquisite neatness of the Wright homestead were rudely invaded by coarse laughter, loud shouts, and the tramp of heavy boots and chink of spurs.

One of the officers soon found and read the note that Laetitia had left under the knocker, while a private, a stalwart, good-natured fellow spelled out the other in the kitchen. Colonel Ross looked long and contemplatively at the crude, childish characters, and his stern face softened.

"Thou'rt a bold little lass and a leal one," he muttered under his breath. "Thou must take us for fiends to destroy thy home after this." He glanced at the humble cottage so bravely pleaded for, and then across to the mountains, where a faint spring twilight was falling and the young moon shone out pale and clear.

Insensibly his thoughts drifted to his own English home, where that same moon would light up his little Cicely's casement. His own little lass! There was a heart under that terrible red jacket.

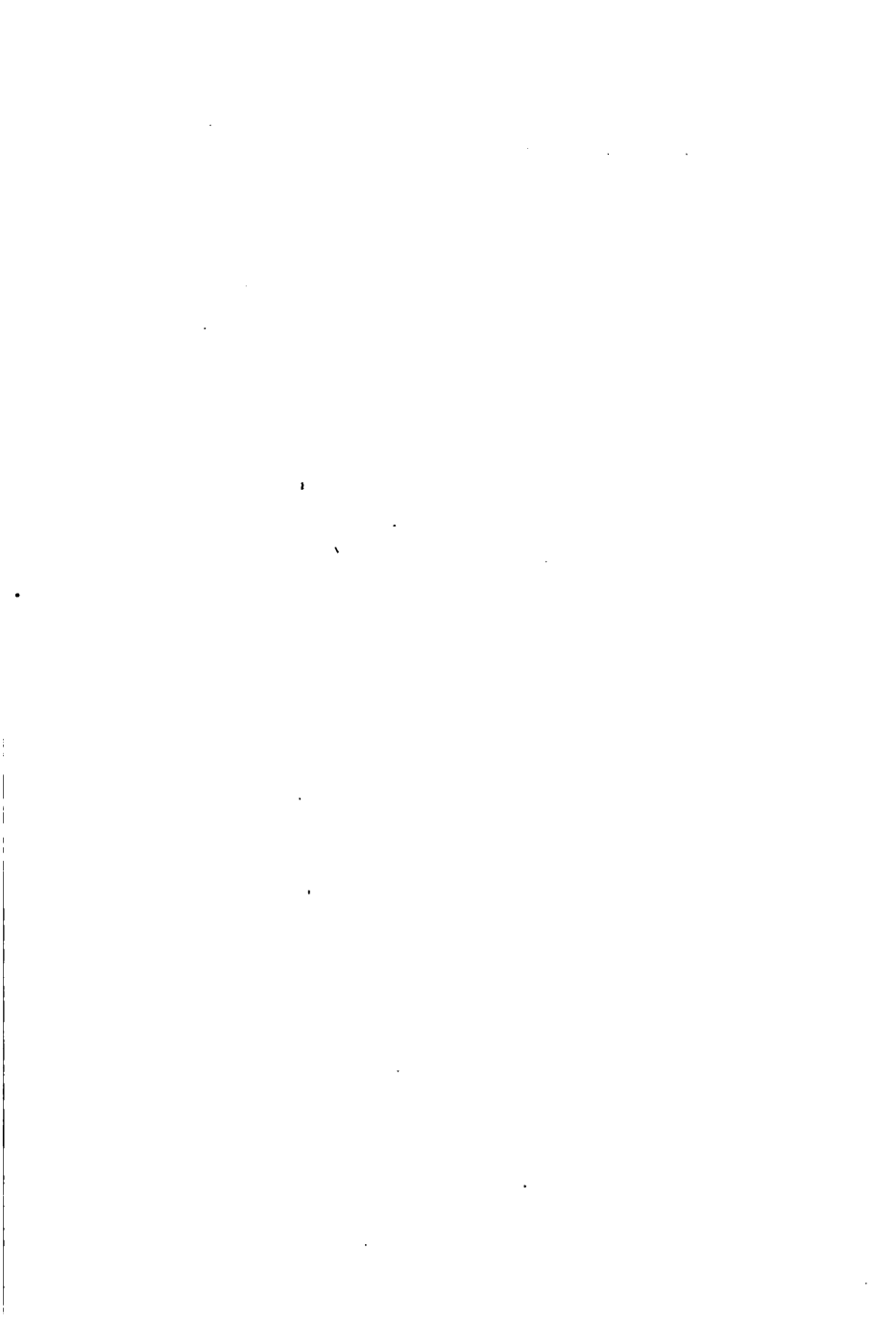
Striding into the kitchen, he found a knot of men commenting on the other letter, and his orders soon went forth that no pillage except for necessary food and fodder was to be indulged in throughout the village, and no damage was to be done to goods or furniture.

Just as the men, hungry and tired, were searching for supper, along the brook came Laetitia's geese toward their pen.

A shout welcomed them, and they were quickly seized and dispatched. All but the gander. One young soldier had a knife raised to kill this squawking fowl, when he paused suddenly. "Mistress Laetitia, since this bird may be thine, I'll spare him out of courtesy," he said gayly, as he popped the old gander into the open pen. "He will make thee a good roast, ere thou



"LAETITIA DETACHED A LITTLE BAG AND A SLIP OF PAPER."



hast the wherewithal to refill thy empty larder." So the solitary gander escaped with his life.

Next night, at sunset, the bugles blew the marching-signal; and the sound echoed and reëchoed up the silent valley, penetrating to the little huts in the forest, where there was anxious watching for the red light of burning homes, and smoke of destroyed crops. But the night fell and waned, and not a glimmer shone to indicate such calamity to the fugitives. Early next morning the little band returned to the village. Instead of wailing and tears, shouts of joy and thanksgiving arose from every house. Dirt and disorder reigned supreme, but not one broken chair nor mutilated dish told of wanton recklessness. In a day or two all could be restored, except for the depopulated poultry roosts, and several pigs which were missing. The sown fields were not trampled, and the dooryard flowers still budded unharmed.

Laetitia's little heart beat with thankfulness, but she kept quite silent. As they dismounted before their own door, she saw the disconsolate gander solemnly perambulating the green, like some self-imposed guardian. "Alas, for the rest of the flock!" cried Dame Wright. "But what has the fowl on its neck? Such a burden I never saw on gander before."

Laetitia sprang forward and, kneeling down, detached a little bag and a slip of paper. The bag chinked with coin, and a dimpled smile broke over her hitherto anxious little face as she read what was written on the slip. Evidently the gay soldier out of courtesy had written it.

"Listen, grandmother, and dear grandfather!" she cried gleefully.

"Sweet Mistress Wright,
'We bid you good-night,
'Tis time for us soldiers to wander.
We've paid for your geese,
A penny apiece,
And left the change with the gander.

"Though redcoats we be,
You plainly will see,
We know how to grant a petition.
With rough soldier care,
We've endeavored to spare
Your homes in a decent condition."

It was signed by the colonel and by a number of the soldiers. Then, in reply to her grandparents' astonished questions, she shyly told them about her petitions, and the daring with which she had left them at the doors.

Fervent were the blessings called down upon her pretty, curly head when the news was spread abroad; but she only laughed merrily and escaped them when she could.

"It is as thou saidst, grandfather," she declared, as she tossed some corn to the bereft gander. "The Lord's hand stayed that of the enemy, and perhaps," stopping to pick a violet while a sweet look came into her face, "the redcoats have hearts like ours."

"Aye, and obedient daughters to touch them to good deeds," said Dame Wright, as she lovingly kissed Laetitia's upturned face.

CORNWALLIS'S MEN

"ALAN, lad, hast thee closed up the mill?"

"Aye, mother; 'deed I have," laughed Alan, coming into the living room from the mill place, and brushing flour from his rosy face as he spoke.

"Thou thinkest I have no head for care taking, mother; but 'deed the sluices are shut and the sacks bestowed; every bar is up and weighted, and the place dark as a dungeon. I'm going to help Nancy fetch the milk."

"Snuff the candles and jog moppet's cradle yon," said the busy dame, stirring the porridge pot, with a thoughtful look in her eyes. "It be a coldish night, Alan. Spy carefully up and down the road as thee goest to Nancy. Hark! what was that?"

"Oh, nothing at all, mother!" said Alan, putting the wooden yoke for the milk pails over his shoulders. "Belike it was Sukey stamping in her stall."

He tramped off to the barnyard, but the goodwife was not satisfied.

She called the children from their romp in the out-kitchen and, putting their bowls of porridge before them, took up a candle and entered the dark mill to examine its fastenings herself.

It was a warm, sweet, musty place. The rafters

were half hidden by dusty festoons of cobwebs. The hoppers, which whirred and purred all day long for the family living, stood silent and dumb. The wooden wheel shutting off the sluices lay well fastened back, and high in the corner was the pile of white bags, tied and billeted with wooden tally sticks, and awaiting their owners.

"There's a smitch of good corn there," said the dame, leaning over to push her finger against a bag, fearing it was not filled to hard pressure. "Many a loaf of bread for Dale-Rill-side lies there, and corn's none too plenty with the war and plundering all about us!" She sighed and went back to the living room.

Nancy and Alan entered with the milk pails. "It's freezing a weeny," said Nancy, giving over her pails to her mother. "There's a bit of ice along the goose brook; the ground's hard as the axhead. And oh, but there's a bonny circle round the moon!"

"Snow," commented Alan. "And then Squire Mortimer cannot ride down to pay his tally and give us the silver for winter shoon."

"You can ay foot it a bit longer as you stand," said the dame, smiling. "It's not lack of silver that fretteth me, nor the riding down of the Squire. I pray we do not see the riding down of Cornwallis's men."

"They raided Sandy Farm last week," remarked Alan, flinging a billet of wood on the fire. "They took all the cattle."

"What would 'ee do, brever Alan, if Cornwallis came to 'ee mill?" piped a wee towhead over his porridge bowl.

"Hark to Jackie!" laughed Alan, catching him up for a kiss. "'Deed, I would put spurs to Sukey, and ride — ride — ride — over sticks and stones and stubble, forsooth, to our camp on the Raritan."

"Aye, lad, it's brave to say; but I would not have the trial for thee — that would I not!"

Nancy cleared away the supper and sang the children to sleep, as they lay in their low trundle beds with the door of the living room open. "Sing 'Burned Byres,'" pleaded Jackie, sleepily. The tall candles flared, and Nancy crooned, —

"Click clacket, click clacket,
They ridet away,
Full forty brave men
At th' peep o' th' day;
But say was it brav'ry
Burned byres to see
O'er all the broad village
O' Stane-by-the-Lea?"

"Thee's a bit too grewsome in thy singing," sighed the dame, listening sharply. "Hist! Does thee no hear hoof beats?"

"Aye, do I," said Nancy, quietly; and going to the lattice she turned its broad button and looked out across the gray moonlit landscape far northward to the line of woods. The brooding stillness of coming snow lay over everything. Through this stillness, sharp and distinct, came the even but distant beat of hoofs — not the light click of a single rider, but the sound of a number of horses' feet.

"They be over the ridge yet," said Nancy, taking

down her saddle. "'Tis windless, and sound travels far. Which shall 't be that rides Sukey, mother — Alan or I?"

Alan came in at the door.

"Not thy saddle, Nancy," he cried. "Let me go!"

"Nay, I am safe enough on Sukey! Bethink thee of the rough soldiers! Stay to protect mother, Alan!"

"But the road is dark and broken; soldier bands are prowling hither and yon," he cried, looking with terror at Nancy tying on her cloak.

"Let Nancy go," said the dame. "We'll have shift enough to hold the mill, I fear."

"Now ride!" cried Alan, as Sukey was saddled, bitted, and bridled. "Ride, Nancy, and pray help from Dickinson's men."

Nancy caught up the bridle and whispered to Sukey. Then away she rode in the darkness, humming half unconsciously the little song, as Sukey's hoofs beat the time: —

"Click clacket, click clacket,
They ridet away,
Their roses were red,
An' their feathers streamed gay.
But redder than roses
Th' stains you may see
Of sword and long saber
At Stane-by-the-Lea!"

Alan carried the babies up into the garret and snuggled them warm under blankets. They barricaded the living-room doors, and then the real difficulty arose in hiding the bags of flour.

"Where — where can they be stowed?" cried the

dame. But Alan answered in action. Squaring his broad young shoulders for the task, he dragged them one at a time, and flung them down the well.

"Thee's ruined them forever, so!" wailed the dame.

"No, mother, only for the bottom few, and e'en then Cornwallis's men shall not seize them — perchance. One looks not for flour down a well."

The soldiers were on the brow of the hill as the last fat bag sank below the well curb. The squad had made a detour to plunder a poultry yard, and live chickens and geese squawked as they rode up. Alan barred the mill door, the mill being still full enough of corn and unground grain for rich spoil; and they waited.

"Open in the name o' the King!" cried a soldier's rough voice.

"Keep a still tongue, mother," whispered Alan. "Let them ay batter and beat a while."

"Let us in to your fire! 'Tis snowing geese feathers!" roared another.

"Come, give us your bacon fitches an' ropes o' onions!"

"Corn, corn! Open th' mill."

Sharp spurs clinked on the garden stones, while the



"HE DRAGGED THEM ONE AT A TIME, AND FLUNG THEM DOWN THE WELL."

with snowball showered down his scurrying first faces, and then the stout oak doors of the mill shook with the rattling fire of muskets and clubs. The brave boys were then attacked, the lances shaken and broken, and splintering glass made holes in the window panes which a hot night breeze.

"There, there! it will hurt ye — mother and child!"

"There is business there," said Alan quietly.

A great fire was kindled through the lattice, pushing the darkness backward. It was overturned with a crash, the window flying wide, and in another instant a white hot flame leaped into the room, followed by several persons crying and laughing.

"Oh ye fire! ye burn the fire house well! Twill burn the mill and all about! What news this mill?"

"The Sheriff's men, a party now serving under Macdonald at New Glasgow," answered Alan. "And he has a service of his own and is in charge."

"So ye are speaking," cried then, show us the new law."

"That will I do," he replied grimly.

"There he is," said a tall soldier of the military bearing who now appeared beyond the barricades. "Tis the sheriff's man. You or the dame must show us the law, else ye are well then, and that will be worse for you."

"Mayhap," said Alan slowly. "But I'll not have it said that Alan Macdonald was the first to show thieves how to steal the pocket purses of his neighbors! The law be not hard for clever rogues to find. My service be not necessary."

"The lad says well," said the dame.

"Ye'll no take my mother for guide either," continued Alan; "or I'll give one of ye the chance to knock me down, and only that, that ye've had the years to get the strength and size I lack!"

"Softly, softly! Go ahead, men," ordered the tall officer; "and keep a civil tongue, young Jackanapes, lest the men do you a mischief. I like you," he added in a low, quiet tone. Then he sat wearily down by the fire, whilst the men began the sack of the mill.

"Thou hast the look of a gentleman, sire. I would thy actions bore thee out," said the dame.

"Madam, war lays on the soldier commands which the man abhors," he replied. "Have you not a baby here?" as his eyes fell on the empty cradle.

"Yea."

"I left a little one three months old in Kent. If I might be trusted, can I see the baby?"

"No, he shall not, mother, while he lets them carry on bedlam yon in the mill place!" cried Alan, tortured by the sounds he heard. "He shall not cosset our baby while his soldiers steal our corn!"

But the dame understood the look in the young officer's face and brought in the baby, warm and rosy from her blanket nest under the rafters. She laid her in the officer's arms.

"Bonny, bonny baby!" he said, touching the tiny hands with reverent fingers and brushing the little cheek with his lips.

"I'll no bide it!" cried Alan. "Put down our baby and call off your men."

"Soft, soft, son Alan! Hark!"

The officer started too. Again the sounds of hoof beats approached, clear above the din in cellar and mill — nearer, nearer. The tender look faded from the officer's face. "We are surprised!" he said, and laid the baby back in its mother's arms.

"Madam, for a space you have made me happy. I thank you. What is the baby's name?"

His hand was on his sword hilt as he waited for her reply.

"Ruth Dale," answered the dame.

Then with a call he sprang in among his men.

Tramp, tramp! Clank, clank! The torches flared, and the young officer helped at the lading of the horses with sacks of corn.

"Dickinson's men!" cried Alan, joyfully. "Hi, hurrah there! Dickinson's men!"

Up they came in the falling snow, their horses steaming; and Sukey came too, brave, noble little Sukey with Nancy on her back.

In the sharp onset which followed, Alan took a part, handling a musket with the heartier will for his former helplessness. But Nancy out in the dark barn quietly blanketed Sukey, and then ran into the house to soothe the screaming children, terrified by the musket shots.

The corn was saved. Only a few bags were gotten away with, and the flour in the well curb lay quite undiscovered. Then back into the north toward New York rode Cornwallis's men.

But Nancy, when the confusion was over, sobbed with her head in her mother's lap, while Alan exulted.

"That was a ride!" he cried. "Mother, you should ay have let me take it!"

"'Twas cold," said Nancy, "and Sukey liked not the icy water at the ford — which minds me of my wet shoon. And had I not met the men at the forks, surely we could not have ridden here in time."

"If ever there was music in nags' hoof beats, 'twas when they rode up," said Alan.

That was the last raid of Cornwallis's men in Dale-Rill-side. But when the war had been over for several years, the postrider stopped at the mill one snowy Christmas eve, and out of his bag came a gift from far over the seas. It was a silver mug; and on it, beautifully graven in quaint old English lettering, were the words:—

RUTH DALE. AMERICA.

FROM THE OFFICER'S BABY,

ELIZABETH EMORY. ENGLAND.

IN THE HOUSE OF A TORY

It was spring in New Jersey, the Yankee spring, with howling winds and nipping cold such as I had never felt before in all my life, in my English home in Devonshire.

Aye, the spring was cold; and the little desolate, war-stricken hamlet in which I found myself was cold — cold and cheerless.

The great room of the manor was very cold, too, this morning, albeit a fire crackled upon the hearth. My father had just finished the reading of morning prayers. The servants filed away in a solemn procession. To hear my father read prayers at any time was enough to make the giddiest housemaid solemn; but that it should affect our housekeeper, Dame Barbara, to tears, surprised me mightily. She was a tall, spare woman with fanatical notions, of whom the entire household stood in awe. My uncle had upheld her in all things. My father, who had lived but three months in the manor, administering my uncle's estate for my cousin Cuthbert — my father, too, respected Dame Barbara.

If I had seen the stone lions on our Devonshire portico weeping tears, it would have surprised me no more than to observe them now, swimming and welling over in Dame Barbara's eyes as she passed me by. The second lesson of the morning had been of the good

Samaritan and my father read it marvelously well; but that it should affect this woman of stone to tears — I turned and faced my cousin Cuthbert. He had laid the Bible aside upon its crimson cushion after my father's reading; he had bowed reverently to my father, as he crossed the hall and entered the library; and now he came to me. He was a tall lad and finely built. To-day he wore a simple suit of mulberry cloth with rich silk finishings. My eyes flashed pleasure at the sight of him, but my thoughts harked back to Dame Barbara's tears.

"Cuthbert," said I, softly, "Dame Barbara cried at prayers. Think you not that was a strange doing?"

"A band of rebels went by here early this morning," said my cousin, thoughtfully, with a grave look upon his usually sunny face. "It was a flying fragment of the ragged miscreants who are camping beyond here. Our men are moving up the valley. Dame Barbara may have seen the rebels. Her husband was, and her son is, a patriot. She herself is a stanch Tory. But come, my dear little coz! See what a benison of a day it is! I know a nook full of daffodils and violets uncurling! Let's go together for a nosegay!"

I went to the sidelight of the great hall door and peered dubiously forth.

"Nay," said I; "I like not the way this Yankee wind rides it over your rough hills. Of a truth, Cuthbert, I wish I were back in Devonshire. There, the spring comes upon one sweetly, and not with roaring winds and beating storms."

"Say not so, Gladys," said Cuthbert, tenderly; "for

after my father's death, who had I of kith or kin in all this land, till you and my uncle took ship to come to me?"

My eyes began to twinkle. "Aye, and had I known then, as well as I know now, what a cockleshell a ship is, I should have cried rivers of tears, instead of the gallons I did shed, at leaving them all."

"Are you homesick?" said my cousin, quickly and jealously.

"I do not know," I returned, looking about me. "Oh, Cuthbert, why does not my father take us both back to England and let these lands of yours lie? I could take you violeting in lanes where the air is shrewd sweet with them, and there is naught of this buffeting wind!"

"Put on your bonnet and cloak, Gladys; and, since we are not in England, I will show you frail, sweet windflowers nodding to match your cowslips, and our roaring wind shall deepen your roses."

Again I turned to the sidelight. "Suppose we meet with rebels. The countryside knows us for bitter Tories, and half the folk of the hamlet are patriots. What is there in this air of yours which makes good English blood turn balking, and the people suffer so many ills to be rid of their king! They are trying to jump over the moon. Can there be a country without a king? England, too, has borne injustice and wended out of it. I have no patience with your land!"

"You wrong my land," began my cousin, with considerable spirit, when — "Lass!" cried a stern voice, and my father appeared in the library doorway; "bon-

net thee and walk abroad with thy cousin, but keep thy woman's tongue from meddling with Yankee politics. Talk begetteth controversy, and controversy begetteth sympathy, and sympathy hath turned more hearts than one from their righteous allegiance. Thy father died stanch and loyal to his king, Cuthbert; and I will not see his son grow up one whit less loyal."

"Sire, I am not disloyal," cried Cuthbert, raising frank, fearless eyes to my father's face. "Have I not pleaded to go with the army? I would go adrumming with my Lord Cornwallis, saidst thou but the word!"

"Not so," returned my father, hastily; "thou art the last bud on my brother's branch. Nay, there be enough stout Hessians to put down these upstart churls. Such as thou art is too good for the sacrifice;" and he turned abruptly back into the library again, leaving us staring.

"I know how the rebels would fare if my uncle were a general," laughed Cuthbert.

I ran for bonnet and cloak, and we two set out together. The wind howled and roared as it whipped the trees. The muck of the road was dried hard. Beneath the wayside thickets, grass, emerald-green, peeped cheerfully. Cloud shadows chased with wondrous swiftness over the hills. And the little brooks, atinkle after an icebound winter, sang merry music.

Presently I began to skip. I caught Cuthbert's hand, and we were dancing a farandole together, keeping time to his sweet whistling, when from behind a tree trunk a fearsome savage stepped suddenly forth. I turned white and cold upon beholding him and was

like to faint; but Cuthbert sprang upon him and gave him a hearty hug, whereupon the Indian grunted and passed on.

"Gramercy, Cuthbert!" cried I. "How dared you so risk your life? If there be Indians, too, along with rebels in your woods, I'll none of your daffodils. Let us go back."

Cuthbert laughed. "That was Nemoset," said he, shrugging his square shoulders. "He was my father's friend before I was born. Quell your English fears. Do you not think that I can draw sword on real danger, that you grow so white?" and with his lad's pride sorely wounded, he strode on ahead.

I followed, lagging. After a few seconds he stopped, and put out a tender arm.

"Beshrew my temper, little cousin," he said. "Walk here by me. See, yonder is the glade full of posies for you."

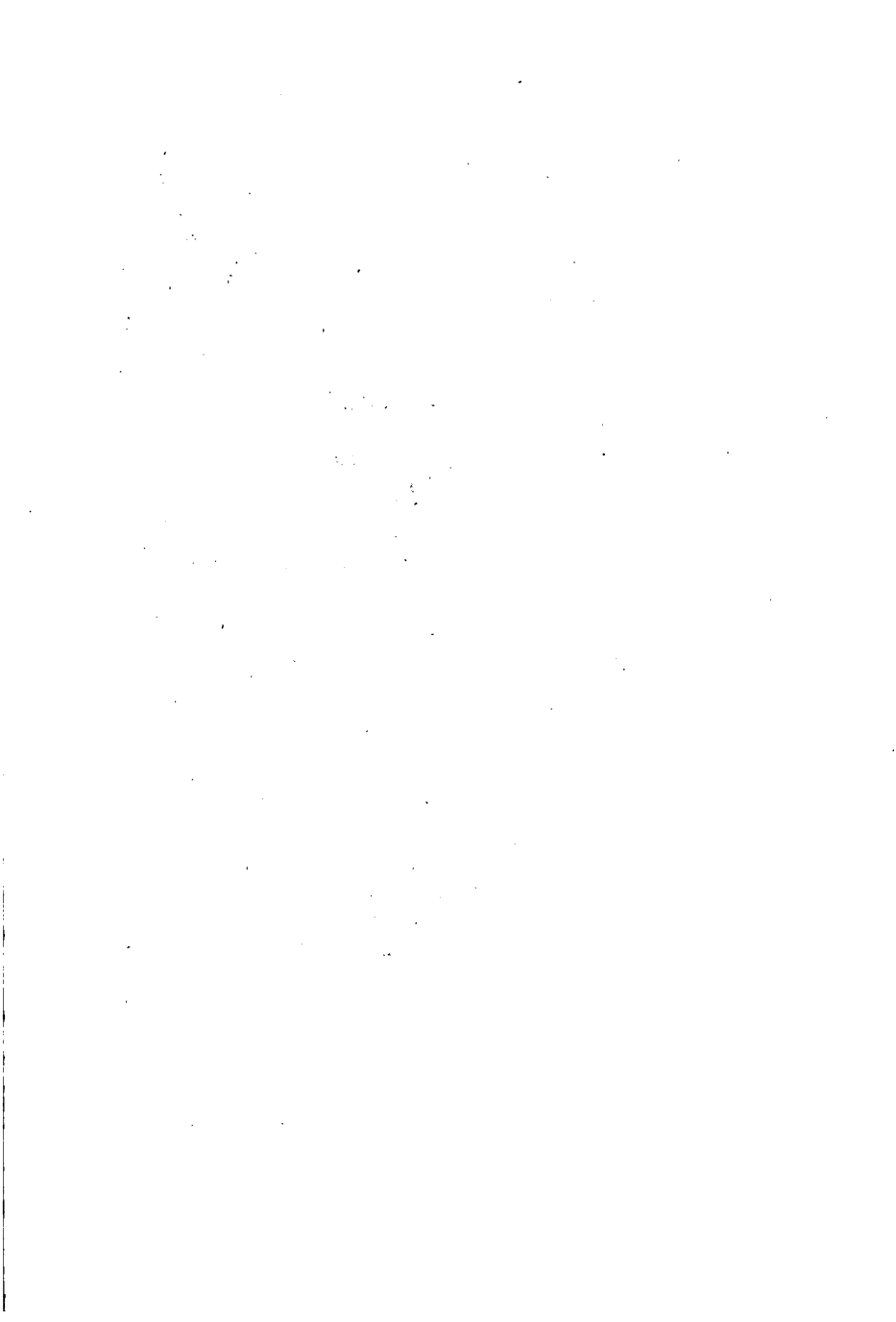
Truly, it was a sweetly pretty spot. The nook fringed upon a wood, and near it ran a brook. There grew the daffodils, rioting in the wind, and long-stalked violets, and yellow, spotted bells of a kind I wot not, but which I plucked most willingly. I soon had my kirtle full of flowers and reached up to put a knot in Cuthbert's bonnet.

"In the clearing across the roadway, if you will brave going into the thicket, you will find nuns' faces and rue," he said.

I kilted up my petticoat and in we pushed, scrambling for the wild flowers hither and thither, until the road was left behind us, and we followed a path strewn thick



““CUTHBERT, COME HITHER!’ I CALLED. ‘HERE LIES A WOUNDED LAD.’”



with oak leaves. With long stout sticks we poked among the leaves for posies.

"See," cried I, "what a mound of leaves lies here!" Stick in hand, I stood over a hillock of oak leaves, piled in a curious manner at the foot of a tree. Brushing the leaves merrily aside, "God's mercy!" I gasped weakly, and stood stock-still. Beneath them, half uncovered, lay a lad of Cuthbert's age, as white as death, with dank and matted locks. He was clasping an old flintlock.

"God's mercy!" cried I again, but did not blanch as I had done over the Indian.

"Cuthbert, come hither!" I called. "Here lies a wounded lad." I stooped and placed my finger upon the pulse of his wrist. Alas, poor boy, he was near to death.

Cuthbert sprang up the path, pushed me aside, and knelt by the boy. "A rebel," he cried sternly as, with most gentle hands, he lifted the heavy musket and drew it forth from the weak encircling arm. Then he looked into the lad's face.

"Why, this is — this is —" he began in a tone of distress and sorrow; then, with a catch in his breath, he finished in a cold voice, "this is just a rebel."

The lad lay there, footsore and ragged, his face pinched with suffering and hunger, and at Cuthbert's cold words I cried out with pity.

"Rebel or no rebel," I said, "he lies here helpless, perhaps dying. He must have dropped from the ranks this morning, and crawled here to cover himself with leaves to die alone. Be he whom he may, we have found him and we must succor him!"

"Mistress," cried my cousin, lifting a white face to mine, "he is a rebel and we are Tories. Think of my uncle's wrath, if we succor him!"

"Cuthbert," I retorted, flashing scorn, "such words from you have a false ring. You, forsooth, to think of going drumming with my Lord Cornwallis! You, who fear to act where duty speaks so plainly!"

Cuthbert sprang to his feet.

"Were you a lad I'd cuff you for such insolence," he roared angrily; then, softening, "My heart is e'en as yours, little one, but my head, too, gives a thought to this sad coil."

"Let your head come to naught," I said; "take to your legs and bring hither restoratives. Will you let him die while you turn thoughts over in your head?"

Cuthbert disappeared, and I knelt down by the lad. I drew his cloak, ragged and thin, closely about him, caught up Cuthbert's which he had left beside me, and wrapped him snugly in it; and then, with thumping heart, I chafed and warmed his poor wrists, getting 'twixt him and the wind. He was hollow-cheeked from hunger; deep, purple circles lay beneath his eyes; and even as I watched him I trembled lest, with every faint breath, the good life should slip away. How mightily I wished to save him!

At last Cuthbert returned. He brought brandy, some milk, and a blanket. In that cold, still wood, with its moaning wind, I was glad to see him come. "Gladys, you are chilled through," he cried; "I fear me you too will be ill."

"Save your fears and minister to the lad," said I,

impatiently. "Oh, Cuthbert, I cannot help thinking, that had you gone your drumming way under Cornwallis, you too might have been lying thus somewhere. Do try to save him!"

While Cuthbert worked with the lad, I stood apart under a tree. "Sweet," he called to me at length, "come hither. The lad is reviving, and if I can get him home, we may save his life. I will not let the blame come upon the servants, and carry him myself I cannot. Pray, will you do an errand?"

I tossed my head and switched my cloak. "As if you needed to ask," I said.

Slyly smiling he continued: "You must go to the little nook where we found the yellow bells. A path leads from it into the wood. Follow it till you come to an Indian's wigwam. 'Tis Nemoset's. Give him this deer's foot, and he will follow you back to me. He can carry the lad for us easily."

My heart stood still. A cold fright crept over me. But Cuthbert was unfastening the deer's foot from his belt and noted me not.

"Why need you call upon that grewsome savage?" I faltered.

"Because only that grewsome savage can bear this lad to my own bedchamber and not share sure punishment with me. 'Tis there or death for — this rebel," he concluded.

Now my teeth fairly chattered from fright. Cuthbert's cool indifference to the punishment his course was inviting shook my own heart with fear for him.

"Dear Cuthbert, let Nemoset take the lad to his

wigwam," I wailed. "Is the danger so great? Oh, why should you be punished?"

Cuthbert's clear eyes met mine steadily.

"Only a warm bed and the right kind of care can save him," he said, "and Nemoset could give neither. Cousin, will you go?"

With a shaking hand, I reached for the deer's foot and sped.

Into the dark wood I dashed, my heart quaking, my feet flying; and as I went, every glimmering, moving shadow magnified itself into an Indian. At last, spent and trembling, I came upon a single log lying as a bridge across a brawling brook. In England we had no such reckless bridges, and I feared greatly to cross it. But, alas, I had no choice. So over it I skipped nimbly, and came upon a tent of skins standing in a clearing.

Nemoset sat beside the door. Inwardly shivering and quailing, I tendered him the deer's foot. He glanced at it, dropped the squirrel's skin he was dressing, and rose to follow me, uttering one fearsome sound. He walked behind me to the little bridge. Again I faltered and feared to cross it. Nemoset walked before me to the middle of the bridge, and then turned and stretched forth a brown hand to lift me over it.

"Nay, nay," I cried, shuddering horribly. "Go first, Nemoset! Go first, and stay thus in the wood. I will follow thy steps."

Nemoset bent a sharp look upon me with eyes so piercing that I would fain have cried out, but that fear chained me. Uttering again that savage sound, he made one stride of the bridge and entered the wood,

while I, creeping timorously, followed him. I kept well out of his shadow; and watching his swaying chaplet of feathers with terrified eyes, I threaded the silent wood path behind him, and we two came at length to Cuthbert. At the first glimpse of Cuthbert's kind face, I sobbed with relief. Nemoset saw my rolling tears and



"I TENDERED HIM THE DEER'S FOOT."

shrugged his shoulders, turning his back squarely to me.

"Gladys," said my cousin, "Nemoset will carry the lad through the woods to the back of the manor. I must fly home by a short cut which I know of to prepare things for the lad's reception. You must return by the road and enter the front door. Hasten, I pray you;

and come what will, your father must not know that a rebel lies sheltered under our roof. Why, sweet, he'd blow a trumpet from the portico till he brought our soldiers galloping, and then he'd hand the lad over to them."

"So would he not," I retorted; but was glad nevertheless that Cuthbert did not stay to argue the point.

Gathering my cloak about me, I fled homeward. Every clump of bushes held a rebel or an Indian to my quaking fears; and glad I was to speed up the broad roadway to our hospitable house door, and at length to sink wearily down before the library fire, out of the cold wind. My father, at his desk, slightly inclined his head at my entrance. He was turning the leaves of one of many ledgers which lay piled about him.

The assurance of safety and the warm blaze made me drowsy. I crept into the chimney nook and furtively watched my father. All manner of plans ran through my head. One of them was to go to him, then and there, and beg shelter for the rebel boy. The daring of this pleased me; but when I glanced at my father's cold, stern face, all hope of success forsook me. After what seemed to me an endless time, Cuthbert's face peered round the door jamb. My father's quill scratched tranquilly on, and I arose and tiptoed out.

Cuthbert led me to the staircase, and we sat down together upon a landing. "The lad lies in my own bed," said Cuthbert, in a low whisper. "I hope no one saw Nemoset carrying him to the house, but I dare say some spying eye may have watched us. We tended him together, Nemoset and I. He is simply half starved

and overcome by weakness. Now, my sweet Mistress Compassion, he lies in bodily comfort, safe from immediate danger of death; but the mischief is brewing for you and me."

He watched me curiously, as he included me in some impending disaster. I smiled. "Something must now be done which only you can do," he continued. "Who'll tell Dame Barbara?"

"Must she be told?" I gasped. My heart sank.

"She must be told," said Cuthbert, firmly; "and you will have to tell her, coz. If any of the servants tell her, I fear to think what might happen. I do not know what she would do, she is so strange and hard. I cannot go to her with this thing, nor can I tell you why. Will you go, Gladys?"

"I will," said I, "at once."

And I went.

No fear of Indian or rebel on the highway sent such thumps to my heart as beset it, when, in response to a sharp "Come in," I lifted the latch of Dame Barbara's door.

The housekeeper's room was large and, save for its floods of sunshine, forbidding and grim. A great fire roared up the chimney, and before it sat Dame Barbara at her flax wheel, spinning.

She barely noticed me as I lagged across the room and dropped upon a cricket before the fire. Her wheel kept up its soft whirring, and the pine logs cracked and sputtered on the hearth.

The words I wished to utter rose slowly in my choking throat. I made no preamble. "Dame Barbara," I

said, "this morning, Cuthbert and I found a rebel lad who had hidden himself in Rising Wood. You mind how the rebels marched by at sunrise. He must have dropped from the ranks and crept away to die under the oak leaves."

Dame Barbara's spinning came to an abrupt stop. "What did you do for him?" she asked so harshly, and with such sudden, strange trembling of her hands, that I quailed more than ever.

"He is in Cuthbert's room," I cried; "and do him no harm, Dame Barbara. Prithee, do not turn the lad out or tell my father, I beg of you, dear Dame Barbara," I implored, following in terror at her heels; for, as if she neither saw me nor heard my words, she seized her key basket and went directly toward Cuthbert's room.

I found Cuthbert upstairs in the embrasured window which looked down toward the British camp. "Well," he asked; drawing me inside the curtains and looking oddly at me, "what did you tell her, and what did she do?"

At the close of my tale Cuthbert said: "Go to the library and stay there. We shall see if she comes to tell my uncle. I have a notion to see for myself what she does when she finds this rebel," and with another odd look he stalked away.

My father was still writing. My presence before the fire scarcely attracted his attention until, in response to Cuthbert's frantic wavings in the hall, I arose and tiptoed out to him again. "Lass," he cried gruffly, "what ails thee? Thou creepest in and out like a mouse! Art thou ill?"

"No, father," I faltered, "'tis Cuthbert who is beckoning me," and I hurried away.

"He is gone," said Cuthbert, looking curious and puzzled. "I can scarce see where she can have spirited him in so short a time. But when I reached my room, he was gone, and the bed was freshly made. I ne'er could fathom Dame Barbara's heart," he continued more to himself than to me. "Could she have driven him forth? Could she be so cruel to—" He broke off. "Well, well, sweet coz," he resumed in a moment, "go find where she is now, and I'll follow my own trail."

I turned my steps hesitatingly toward the house-keeper's room. She sat again before the fire, spinning. I had a strange fancy that she had never been away from the place, so calm was she. As I crossed toward her she said, still pushing her treadle, "Lass, art thou well?"

"Am I well, Dame Barbara?" I echoed uneasily. "Surely I am well."

"Where is Cuthbert?" she next demanded.

"He—" I stammered, "he is hunting for the rebel boy—he says—"

"I found no rebel in Cuthbert's room," declared Dame Barbara, quietly. I looked at her with wide, startled eyes.

"If rebel there was there, he must have risen and crawled away again. I made the bed."

"But, Dame Barbara—" I began. She cut me off with, "Does your father know?"

"No-o," I faltered.

"Has Cuthbert ridden over to the British camp to report this spy? Cuthbert is a Tory."

"Art thou not a Tory, too?" I cried, fearing her less and scorning her more for her cold words.

"Thou knowest I am a Tory, stanch and loyal," she said; "and so art thou. These rebels are rending not only the land, but the heart of our most gracious king as well."

"The heart of the king was sound and whole enough when I saw him last at Brighton not six months since," I cried hotly. "You are accountable for the lad's life, Dame Barbara. It hung by a thread to live or to die. If he was sent adrift —"

"Gladys!"

It was my father's voice at the door. "Come, lass, thy pate is quicker at figuring than mine. Come prove some columns for me." And I was fain to go, sitting wearily at the library table, adding up long sums, while worrisome fancies danced between me and the figures.

At luncheon Cuthbert did not appear. In the afternoon I took a long ride abroad with my father.

At candlelight I sat in my room before the mirror, waiting for my maid to come and dress me for dinner. Presently she entered the room, and standing behind me lifted my hair to brush it. "Your hand trembles, Banks," said I; "what ails you?"

"Oh, Mistress Gladys," she faltered; "I like not this strange land."

"Well, for the matter of that, I like it not myself," replied I, composedly. "But what has stirred you, Banks?"

"As I was coming, in the dusk, past the housekeeper's rooms, I heard low, strange moans. I listened by the wall and heard them plainly, Missie. Dame Barbara ne'er moans in such a fashion. I'm clean frightened. 'Twas a ghost warning to me that some one I love over the seas is about to die."

"Hush thee," I cried irritably, "and tell thy cock-and-bull story to no one else. By what wall didst thou listen for the moans?"

"'Twas the wall of the storeroom."

"'Twas the wind in the chimney, belike," I finished in a comforting tone. "If thou tellest that to the servants, they'll laugh at thee."

"'Twas no wind," muttered Banks; but I knew she would mind my warning to tell no one else.

I knew now that the rebel boy lay hidden in the little storeroom. Cuthbert's room had been his mother's before his, and a winding stair led down from it to the housekeeper's room. So there he lay, hid by Dame Barbara herself, who had accused Cuthbert of handing him over to our soldiers as a possible spy.

When I entered the drawing-room, I found my father in conversation with an army officer, and was duly presented to Lieutenant Grimshaw. While I was making my curtsy my knees knocked together with fright, for I knew no officer had been bidden to dinner; and I looked hastily about for Cuthbert. He sat over behind a curtain tuning his guitar, and as soon as possible I crossed over to him.

"Do you know," I asked hurriedly, "whether the lieutenant is here to dinner by my father's invitation?"

"He is not," returned Cuthbert. "His coming surprised my uncle. I heard him ask the lieutenant to dine with us. It's a coil, sweet coz; and if I knew where that rebel lad was whisked to, I'd be relieved."

I knew, but I said no word.

Dinner was announced, and Cuthbert took me in. My father and his guest discussed the war freely, and commented upon General Washington's troops, who had passed through our town the night before, on their way to Morristown.

"Beggars," growled my father, "vagabonds and outcasts! Such a handful should not give us the trouble they do."

The lieutenant eyed my father sharply. "Would you give shelter to such a vagabond or an outcast?" he asked. "The rebels passed your gates early this morning; at least a small detachment of them did. They eluded us by following an Indian trail through Rising Wood."

"The servants saw them go by; I did not," replied my father, indifferently.

"Then you have sheltered no such stray rebel or vagabond?" repeated the lieutenant.

My father looked across the table at him with a quiet scorn which was ominous.

"Sir," he said haughtily, "I am an Englishman and a Tory. Your question insults this roof."

The lieutenant smiled quietly. "They who enter by front doors do not always know who comes in at rear ones," he said in a tone of apology.

My father rose and looked down on him. "Have

done with your riddles and insinuations," he said sternly. "You are accusing me of something; out with it, sir, out with it!"

The officer arose and faced my father. "I am sent, sir," he said in a tone of sincere regret, "to accuse you of harboring a rebel spy. One is now under your roof. The knowledge of our position would indeed be valuable to General Washington, but why should his spy be protected by the roof of a stanch Tory?"

My father's face grew purple with wrath. "Prove your words," he cried, "or by —" Then he looked at me and said, "Have Dame Barbara and the servants summoned."

The servants with frightened faces filed into the dining room, gleaming with its silver and clear candle-lights. I watched Dame Barbara's face. It was, as usual, passive, stern, and calm. My father put the accusation to all the servants with a lionlike roar.

"Know ye aught of this, aught of this, any of ye?" he thundered.

Banks stepped forth. "I heard a strange moaning as I passed by the housekeeper's room to-night," she said; "it sounded like a body in dire pain."

My father's falcon eye swept the circle of faces.

"Dame," he said, "is any of the household ill?"

"None, sir," she replied respectfully.

Then he turned to the men, putting them through a series of sharp, searching questions which were answered by truthful negatives. Cuthbert and I were not questioned.

I stood quailing and terrified during the whole exami-

nation, my eyes upon Cuthbert who, fearing to interrupt my father, yet tapped his sword hilt impatiently, anxious to be allowed to speak. With the last "No, sire," of the butler, my cousin stepped forth and spoke in an even, steady voice with a sidewise look at me which plainly commanded, "Let me take the blame."

"Uncle," he said, "'twas I who brought a rebel lad here to my home this morning." Then he told the whole story, shielding me tenderly at every turn.

My father said not a word. His proud old head sank to his breast. His eyes sought the ground. The hand he reached forth to the table to steady himself trembled. The silence was terrible. In every fiber I felt that my cousin Cuthbert was being judged a traitor.

"Daddy," I cried softly, my voice frightening even myself in that fearsome silence, "the lad was no rebel. He was only a poor dying boy, and the gospel you read at prayers this morning was that of the good Samaritan."

The officer gave me a long, shrewd look, and his face lightened.

Dame Barbara stepped suddenly in front of my father. "Master," she said in a trembling tone, "come with me to the bed of the lad."

Seizing one of the tall candlesticks from the mantel, she turned abruptly, we following, while the servants, awed and frightened, stole back to their places in the hall. Through the two great storerooms she led us, to the little storeroom at the rear. In one corner, in the dark shadow, on a low trundle-bed lay the rebel boy, moaning in the delirium of fever. So young, so emaciated, so piteous-looking, he was strange quarry

for Lieutenant Grimshaw's hunting. Dame Barbara stood above him, shading the candle gleam from his face.

"He is my son," she said quietly, "and the young master knew it. He is a patriot of this rebel land, and his father was one before him. His father was killed last year, and the lad took his place. I am a Tory. When he deserted England and his king, I disowned my boy. This morning I saw him pass with the soldiers. I saw his naked, bleeding feet, as he marched along; and yet, mother that I am, I let him go by with a hardened heart because he bore arms against his king. God judged me, sir, and gave me one more chance. The young master found the lad where he had lain him down to die, more wounded by his mother's bitter looks, perhaps, than ever he could have been by the king's bullets. I thanked God on my knees when I found the lad in Master Cuthbert's bed. 'Twas no rebel I saw lying there, dear Mistress Gladys, but my own, my only son. Do with him what you will, — I am still true to my king, — but let me nurse my boy back to life! I am none the less his mother."

My father and the officer looked at each other; and my father said, "Man, 'tis no rebel, that, but a sick lad, and by my fealty to King George I'll succor him to health."

The lieutenant stretched a hearty hand to my father. "The lad may not escape the clutches of Death," he claimed, "but egad, he's escaped mine! When he's better, mount him and send him pacing after his ragged compatriots. He'll gain no news beneath this roof.

And if England must war with a callow boy, it shall be face to face in the ranks, and not in a trundle-bed!"

Dame Barbara bowed and curtsied and kissed both the officer's and my father's hands. As for Cuthbert and me — we fled to the drawing-room, and there we danced such a farandole as made the prisms of the candlesticks jingle.

My father and the lieutenant finished dinner together, and the lieutenant's horse was brought round. They took leave of each other upon the porch; and I heard my father say, "May the guidance of God let the right win."

Weeks afterward, when the lad's illness was mended, my father gave him a horse and he rode away.

Soon after, the struggle became bitter for us. The Hessians made no headway 'gainst the barefoot patriots. Cuthbert chafed and fumed about the house, but spoke not a word of his longing to be in the fight.

At length, when the summer was glorious, my father called me into the library one day, kissed me on the forehead, and said softly: "Gladys, to-morrow Cuthbert rides away to serve his king under Lord Cornwallis. The king needs him, and 'tis right that even he should go. But, God be thanked, Gladys, that thou'rt a lass."

THE BULB OF THE CRIMSON TULIP

THE village of Newark lay dusty and dozing in the hot sunshine of an early summer day. In the church steeple the bell rang out three of the afternoon.

The broad highway was almost deserted, save for a waddling flock of ducks crossing toward the wayside brook, and an old man, with silvery gray locks neatly tied in a queue, who leaned upon a garden wicket and watched his opposite neighbor.

She was a little slip of a lass in a brown stuff dress and plain cap, kneeling, trowel in hand, beside a bed of tulips which glowed scarlet and yellow and white in the bright sunshine. Slowly and with infinite care, she raised a beautiful crimson blossom from the mold and transplanted it to a flowerpot. Then, rising with the posy clasped in her arm, Margaret came down to the gateway and looked anxiously up the Broad Street of the Jersey town.

Grandpapa Davis nodded and smiled at her standing there, an erect, graceful little figure, with a look of thoughtful care upon her face. The shadows of the newly leaved trees blotched and flickered upon the highway. Beyond lay the military green, with its long rows of elms arching over a pathway; and out of their shadowy distance appeared a gleam of scarlet,

which proved to be a tall soldier walking slowly along, flourishing his riding whip. Grandpapa Davis and the little maid exchanged glances. His was one of deep anxiety; hers of questioning fear.

Both thought instantly of the evening before, when the roadway glimmered in faint starlight, and a wounded rider crept up in the fragrant May darkness to the cottage gate. There he was assisted from the horse by women's hands and disappeared within the cottage, bowered in its budding vines. Grandpapa recalled Margaret, standing in the candlelight of his kitchen, telling him her brother's story. The anxiety of a woman replaced the pretty, roguish joking she was wont to parry with him.

Mahlon Ross had ridden from Elizabethtown with a cipher of importance from Maxwell of that place to General Washington, lying at Morristown. While crossing the Salt Meadows his horse had thrown him; and he was able to go forward only to his home, where he arrived fainting in his saddle.

"Whom shall we trust to carry the papers onward?" Margaret had asked the old man.

"Ford Halsey of the mill," he answered promptly. "He is in York Town on business and will be back by the coach to-morrow noon. Ford rides like the wind and knows every byway as well as an Indian."

As Margaret watched the coming British soldier, she anxiously scanned the highway beyond him in the direction of the Halseys' mill, whither her mother had ridden to interview Ford. No welcome figures of horse and rider appeared in the sunny loneliness of the broad

highway. A robin whistled in the tree top, the soldier lounged slowly along, and drowsy silence reigned.

Her grandmother's gentle old face, framed in its cap and kerchief, appeared above the blue half door.

"Margaret!" she called softly.

Margaret turned hastily.

"Dear heart," said the old woman, "it has just struck three. What keeps thy mother?"

The little maid shook her head.

"Old Dobs sleeps and dreams with mother on his back," she said. "Oh, I would that he felt my birching! If his lazy hoofs kept time to my heart beats he would be here. Grandmother, is Mahlon safe, lying in the stable loft? I see a redcoat yonder."

"Tut!" cried the old woman, sharply. "Even the spring wind has ears in days like these! Be mindful of what thou sayest, my child!"

Then, seeing the flower, she exclaimed, "What art thou doing, lass? Why hast thou potted a tulip to-day?"

"'Twas promised to Cicely Halsey for this afternoon. 'Tis her birthday, and she admires this tulip. It is most rare of color. I thought later to ride to the mill to give it to her."

Her glance strayed from the blossom in her arms to the soldier crossing the road. Then, with a thought kindling in her face, she gave her grandmother a swift look and fled, without another word, around the corner of the house. Setting the tulip on the bench seat of the rear porch, she went on to the barn, where her sick brother lay concealed, and returned almost immediately with something clasped under her kerchief. One

pull, and the tulip came out of the pot, the mold scattering over the porch seat. Catching up a knife, she parted the bulb in halves and hollowed out the centers. In the bottom of the pot she placed a packet of paper drawn from her bosom, and within the hollowed bulb she hid the strip of precious cipher. With hands that lost no time, she repotted the cherished flower, cleared away the traces, and stood looking down upon it regretfully.

"If any redcoat must have Mahlon's papers, I would rather it were thee," she said, stroking a satin petal of her tulip. "I did so hate to wound thee — I who nursed thee from a sprout!" And with a little childish quiver of the lips, she stooped and kissed the flower before entering the house.

The grandmother sat knitting.

"I like not that redcoat soldier sniffing our lilac bushes so closely," said Margaret. "I would mother were returned! But I have thought of a way to get the papers to Ford under the very nose of the redcoat, if need be — which God grant not! I fear there are other soldiers of his kind in the village."

The old lady sighed and shook her head. "War breeds old thoughts in young minds. 'Tis ill to judge the errand of a man by the color of his coat, lass. For the papers, I'll trust thy wit."

Margaret flitted restlessly from table to dresser. A small chicken, under her skilled fingers, was soon bubbling in the pot. A head of lettuce lay crisply piled on a dish, and out of the oven she drew a freshly baked loaf. With her back to the doorway, she did not see

a shadow fall across the sanded brick, as the redcoat soldier, leaning his arms on the ledge of the half door, looked keenly about the little kitchen.

"Lass!" cried his hearty voice, thick with the Yorkshire accent, "thou seemest too busy even so much as to hear soldier boots crunching thy dooryard gravel — though I tried most manfully to steal a march on thee, I'll confess."

Margaret turned and faced him steadfastly, while the grandmother's knitting dropped to her lap at the first sound of his voice. Neither spoke. "Hast thou a well?" he continued. "I'm fain to drink! This road tramping is churlish business. And ye have churlish folk in this town. Faith, I've no opinion of their eyes and ears! General Knyphausen would better have sent one of his own Hessians instead of us; he had learned fully as much."

"Thou art from Yorkshire," said Grandmother Ross, mildly. "Since thou art thirsty, wouldst thou drink a glass of elder wine and eat a slice of rice cake made after the fashion of the motherland?"

"Why, now!" — the broad red face glowed with pleasure and astonishment — "that's the first civil word I have heard this day! Madam, I do assure you, that wakes the heart in me and makes me loath to take thy hospitality and do my soldier's errand here."

A flush of surprise almost matching the soldier's had swept over Margaret's face at her grandmother's words. But now she stepped forward courteously. "Nay," she said, setting a rush-bottomed chair for him

in the cool breeze of the doorway, "thou mayst taste my mother's wine, for thou art weary and a wayfarer. Later, if needs must, we can talk of war."

The soldier dropped into the chair, with his clanking spurs rattling on the bricks, and drank thankfully the great draught of water Margaret dipped from the well-curb bucket and brought to him.

"Ah, that takes the blaze of the sun out of the blood!" he said. His face softened as he watched her prepare the cake and wine for him.

When she placed them before him, the grandmother said gently, "'Tis wine, sir, of the real English smack, being a recipe of my mother's; and I hope thou'lt like the cake."

"I like them ay well," he growled, as the spicy wine fell clearly into the glass, "but not to repay thee with saucy questions."

The old woman sighed softly. "Sir, if saucy questions be thy duty, do not shirk aught of it. Hospitality is a duty, too."

"I am looking for a lad who should have ridden by here on a roan horse last eventide."

"One of thine own men?" asked Margaret, steadily, though with an effort.

The soldier stared at her.

"Beshrew me, no," he said, laughing. "Do we way-lay our own messengers?"

"Then art thou not tapping at folly's wicket to ask us to betray ours?" she returned.

He surveyed her slowly, from the white cap to the tiny buckled slippers, and said soberly, "Lass, all the

folk of this town are not rebels; neither must an answer be always yea or nay to be useful."

While she set the plate and glass upon the dresser, he stared gloomily out into the sunshine.

"Hast thou kith or kin fighting against the king?" he asked.

"Yes," said Margaret, standing by her grandmother's chair; "my father and my brother. Sir, had I seen twenty horsemen riding by, thou knowest I would not tell thee!"

He looked sharply at her again under his bushy brows and shook his head.

"What if I tell thee I must search thy dwelling?" he said, scanning her face.

"My grandmother is old, and I am young. Our doors lie open to thee. Naught could hinder thee. Neither of us would ask thee not to. If that be thy present duty, follow it; yet it sets not well with thy question."

Margaret swung open the porch door, where the scarlet tulip drooped its head; and the soldier glanced past it, beyond the double rows of tasseled currant bushes, to the door of the little barn. A sound of hoof beats stopping in front directed his glance to the highway again.

Dame Ross slowly dismounted from Old Dobs at the horse block; and Margaret said, "It is my mother." She glanced at her grandmother. "Mother has been to mill, sir," she volunteered to the soldier.

"Thou ridest thine own grist to mill, eh?" he said, with returning good humor. Then, as the dame put out her hand for the heavy sack, he suddenly strode down to the garden gate and, sweeping a low bow

to the startled woman, said, "May I not put this on the kitchen floor for thee, or in the stable?"

Mrs. Ross turned herself to Dobs's bridle to hide the deadly whiteness of her face. The soldier stood there, smiling cheerfully.

"If thou wilt put the flour on the kitchen floor, I will thank thee. It is much courtesy from a stranger. I knew not that my roof entertained a guest of thy coat," she said at length.

"Nay, I'm not of thy convictions," laughed the soldier, laying the sack upon his scarlet shoulder; "but my mother taught me courtesy to a woman ere the king taught me soldiering."

Margaret met her mother upon the threshold. "I am so glad thou art come," she said, mutely reading her face, as she laid her hand on her mother's bonnet strings to undo them. "I feared I should not get to Cicely's to drink birthday tea with her. Mother, our guest is a wayfaring soldier." She looked at him apologetically for this poor introduction.

The dame felt the scrutiny of a keen pair of eyes fixed upon her face.

"Madam," he said, "my errand is to ask a question. Hast thou seen a lad on a roan horse riding by thy doorway?"

"Which way should the lad have been riding?" asked the dame, tying on her house apron; "for, though the highway is a broad one, it leads as easily to Elizabethtown as to Morristown. Riders choose both ways to do their galloping. Dost thou take us for Tories, to ask us such a question? I wonder at thee!"



'NOT SO FAST,' HE SAID, SMILING QUIZZICALLY UPON HER."

The soldier laughed restlessly. "I was not built to prowling in cottage gardens," he said uneasily, picking up his whip from the floor.

Margaret had slipped out and tethered Old Dobs to the pear tree. Now she came in by the back porch door, calmly carrying her potted crimson tulip.

"Mother," she said, placing the flower upon the table and reaching for her straw bonnet, "'tis late to visit Cicely, but I think I will go, as I promised. I see shower caps rising out of the west, and I want to get the tulip there before the rain."

"'Tis a bonny flower," said the soldier, lifting the pot and sniffing the blossom. "Dost thou ride to a birthday feast?"

"Only to carry a token to a friend," she replied, looking wistfully up at him, standing there with the tulip in his arms.

The dame had assented to Margaret's request, and now sat down to her knitting. A waft of cool, scented mountain air suddenly swayed the white curtain of a west window. "I sniff a shower in that breeze," said Margaret. "Sir, I must go. Good day to you;" and she reached for her flower.

"Not so fast," he said, smiling quizzically upon her. "I must go too. I shall seek no further in this town. My question seems like saying, 'Dilly, Dilly, Dilly, come and be killed.' Whither ridest thou, little hostess — north or south? If north, I beg to go with thee. My horse is tethered back of the church."

"I go north, sir," said Margaret, her eyes resting on

the flower, which drooped now on the soldier's broad breast as he still retained it in his arms.

"North? That is well. Wilt thou point out the turn to the Bloomfield road?" And he followed her down the garden pathway.

"Gladly," said Margaret, as she mounted nimbly to Old Dobs's back. "'Tis only a bit beyond the mill road. Sir, I can carry my tulip now."

"Thou wilt not have a redcoat cavalier, eh, to bear it for thee?" he said, laughing, as he delivered the precious pot into her outstretched hand.

Margaret grasped it, a wave of intense relief following the tension of uncertainty of the last few minutes. She pulled Dobs's bridle with a lighter heart, when a loud whinny in the little stable beyond suddenly broke the stillness.

The soldier turned his head and listened. In the swift action lay so shrewd a suspicion that the little heart beating behind the flowerpot stood almost still; but the serene look in Margaret's eyes never wavered.

"I fear we shall soon have a shower," she said, calmly meeting the soldier's gaze. "Dapple is whinnying, for he feels the thunder. Come, Dobs, thou must do thine errand briskly, if thou wouldst not have a wet skin."

She nodded to her mother and grandmother, and the soldier took a gallant leave of them; then together they disappeared up the road in a cloud of sifting golden dust.

The busy hoppers of the old mill hummed and sung in the afternoon stillness. Cicely Halsey had moved

her flax wheel into a little arbor back in the mill garden, whence she could overlook the stable yard and Ford, who was sitting in a doorway, booted and spurred.

Suddenly up the road came Margaret riding Old Dobs, who was taking long, surprised strides, such as stirred in his dull brain certain memories of his youth. With flushed cheeks and shining eyes, Margaret ran up the garden path and, bursting into the little arbor, flung the tulip upon the table.

"Where is Ford?" she cried. "Will he ride, Cicely? Will he ride?"

"Will he ride?" said Cicely, in astonishment. "He has been booted and spurred this half hour and waits but the papers. Did not thy mother tell thee?"

Margaret shook her head and then, without a word, wrenched the tulip from the pot.

"Why, now!" exclaimed Cicely. "What art thou doing? That is my crimson tulip thou art tumbling from the pot! Is that the way —"

But Margaret was running stableward with the stalkless bulb and a packet in her hands, leaving Cicely speechless with dismay, surveying the dying flower and the heap of dirt.

Ford, on receiving the papers, simply looked inside the bulb and, with a shrewd, intelligent nod to Margaret, slipped it into his pocket, mounted his horse, and rode away. Margaret swung the barred gate behind him and turned, to find Cicely at her elbow. A long, distant roll of thunder sounded in the west. A gust of wind swept the garden and puffed fragrantly into Margaret's face. She turned to Cicely.

"Thank God, Ford is gone!" she said. "The English evidently have learned that a messenger was sent with important news to Morristown. More likely they also know of Mahlon's hurt. A redcoat, looking, as I feared, for his hiding place, came to the house this afternoon. I thought he would search the place, and so I hid the papers in thy flower, knowing I could get Grandpap Davis to ride with them to thee, if worst came to worst. Now I fear their return to take my brother prisoner. They will if they find him. Nay, do not look so frightened, Cicely. I saved the papers, and I must save Mahlon. I saw a look in the soldier's eyes when Dapple whinnied! The very roan he was so keen to find! Thou seest I must pace it home, dear."

Dobs, wounded and puzzled at his mistress's heartless urging of his lazy old legs, almost galloped to the home door, and the thunder rolled and muttered. A grayness had quenched the afternoon light, and the hush that preludes the storm lay over house and garden as Margaret entered the kitchen.

"Ford is well on the way, and the papers with him," she said, in answer to her mother's anguished glance. "The soldier did not ride off with the tulip. But I fear he will return. We must hide Mahlon in Grandpap Davis's old sugar house, across the huckleberry swamp, and tie Dapple in the clearing. Rain or not, ill or not, Mahlon must go."

With the first big drops of the rain, the little train set out across the fields; and as it poured down faster and faster, all traces of Dapple's hoofs were washed from the dusty pathway they had taken. In

an hour the sick lad was under cover, and the shower had passed.

The garden lay sweet and damp and dripping in the evening twilight; and Margaret was stooping to raise and bind back some storm-beaten sprays of a rose-bush, when at the gate five redcoat horsemen drew rein.

Margaret dropped her hammer in the mold. Inside the doorway the grandmother never ceased her knitting, and upon the porch appeared the dame's quiet figure. The soldier of the afternoon came up the path, with his companions following him. In her first keen glance at him, Margaret saw how entirely he had become simply an English soldier in discharge of his duty.

"I learn that the rider whom I seek lieth ill in this cottage," he said sternly. "Dame, I must search this dwelling."

"'Tis easy to war on women," she answered, sighing.

The soldier glanced at Margaret. "They shall do no more than is needful," he promised.

Margaret waited in the porch. She heard them clank their way across the kitchen floor. The rough soldier voices rose and fell; and then she heard her mother's quiet, clear tones. Both stalls in the stable were empty, for Dobs was out in the pasture with Grandpapa Davis's old roadster. The hay where Mahlon lay, Margaret's own arms had retossed. The fireflies began to twinkle in the garden ere the search was given up.

Then the soldiers rounded the house corner; and Margaret, sitting on the step, arose. The tall soldier stopped, while his companions strolled on to the gate, plucking flowers.

"I did not find thy brother," he said gravely, "and perchance thou knowest why. If his hurt was slight, no doubt he rides to Morristown. Thou art a brave little woman. Wilt thou bid me good night?" He put out his hand, and Margaret took it heartily.

The dispatches were safely delivered by Ford's hand to Washington as the General was about to journey to Springfield; and Mahlon, recovering, soon rode Dapple back to his post.

Three years later, Margaret stood beside her brother in New York City and watched the British troops leaving the country. Suddenly a soldier in the marching ranks caught sight of her sober little face, and his bright smile of recognition brought an answering flash from her.

It was the tall redcoat; and Margaret's friendly little hand waving to him as he left her shores gave token that kinship of heart had wiped out remembrance of that sharp peril which had rent in twain the bulb of the crimson tulip.

THE LEGS OF DUNCAN KETCHAM

WORD had gone forth that the treaty with England was signed, and that the British would surely leave New York.

Upon reception of the glad news, thousands of exiles who had been driven from their homes during the British occupation began a general return, jostling at the wharves and wayside inns other thousands of Tories fleeing to British soil.

On a drizzling November evening, in the year of our Lord, 1783, the old Fraunce's Tavern, which stood at the corner of Broad and Pearl streets, was in an unusual state of excitement. Carriages of all sorts came and went, after depositing guests at the great corner door; and window after window of all its four stories sent the glimmer of candlelight abroad on the moist darkness.

Within, in the great kitchens, rush and bustle prevailed; great fires roared up their chimneys; there were fragrant odors of cooking, the creaking of meat jacks, laughter and quick jokes as men and maids rushed past each other in the hurry of service, and a general enjoyment of the unusual stir.

The housekeeper, Dame Ketcham, and her fifteen-year-old daughter, Betty Ketcham, had their hearts and hands full. Betty served upstairs at the linen presses, giving out bed linen and candles to the excited housemaids,

while Dame Ketcham on the ground floor kept a sharp eye to the dining room and its busy waiters. She was giving directions to a clumsy maid, when suddenly her ear caught the sound of a new arrival in the entrance hall; and the name shouted out to the landlord by the door lackey caused every bit of color to leave her face. She hurried to the back hall entrance. Her ears had not deceived her. The heavy, broad-faced gentleman in the act of rolling jovially across the hallway to greet the landlord was none other than Captain Jonas Talbot, of the private merchantman, the *Jolly Sally*; and after an absence of six years the *Jolly Sally* was at length in port. This was news indeed for Dame Ketcham, since her only son was a sailor lad on the ship.

On his way upstairs, Captain Jonas passed Betty on the upper landing; and he responded so kindly to her nervous curtsy that she said in a low voice, "Welcome home, sir; and please, sir, when does Duncan leave ship?"

"At eight to-night," replied Duncan's captain.

Betty rushed for her mother's sitting room and entered it at one door as the dame, puffing heavily, entered at the other.

They fell into each other's arms and shed a few tears of relief and joy, for great had been their fear lately that the *Jolly Sally* was lost; then the dame bethought herself of ways and means.

"Duncan will have to sleep in thy room, lass, and thou must e'en bunk in with me. To think of laying eyes on him so soon, after such weary waiting! I can hardly bide. I wish the guests were not so greatly on my

mind, this night of his home-coming. Sakes, with everybody in the town running homeward, little did I think my own lad would come too! At eight o'clock, said the captain! 'Tis now past five.

"Everything happens in a heap. First we had to clean after the Tories who left us, box and bundle, to fly to king's soil in Canada; then come our own good Whigs rushing back to New York and filling every nook and cranny of this tavern; and last comes the *Jolly Sally* back from the wild seas with my boy once more! I fear I shall not live with it all!"

Betty laughed and poked the fire. "Thou'lt live fast enough, mother, with the thought of Duncan to stay thee! Sit by, till I brew thee a cup of tea; thou art heavy to be on thy feet so much. Dost thee know, mother, that General Washington has given it out, on his own word, that every man-jack of a redcoat and Hessian is to leave us for good, on the twenty-fifth?"

"I'm getting gray with wishing to see that," grumbled the dame. "'Tis well it has been put off so long, though, now that Duncan will be home to see the sight. Sakes, but I'm weary of the British, and that shameful, cruel man, the Provost Cunningham! We've none of us had a free foot or hand or mouth here since seventy-six. And lately 'tis rumored they are ay going, but they never go! On the twenty-fifth, say you? God speed the day!"

"They be surely going, mother. The Continentals are camped up at MacGowan's Pass, ready to march in at the word; the British war ships and transports lie down the harbor, and wilt thou not be glad that

Duncan's at home to see his own flag flying from the fort? And, mother, Shannah Merrick burnt holes in three sheets this week in the ironing."

This sudden switch in Betty's mind from patriotism to household detail stirred the dame to activity again, and both departed to their duties.

A short distance from the Battery, rolling gently on the black bay water, lay the huge, dim hulk of the *Jolly Sally*. Her decks were slippery with rain, and her cordage rattled and creaked in the wind.

With his eyes fixed toward the mass of black shapelessness which meant New York and home to him, Duncan Ketcham, with his boxes lying beside him, impatiently awaited the signal that the boat was ready to take him ashore. He had shore leave for five days; and his long, gaunt body fairly shook with eagerness to be at home on his own soil once more.

At length the signal came; and after a lurching trip through the darkness to a landing at Whitehall, he leaped to shore and ran up the dark streets, gloomier for the shadow of Fort George, till with thumping heart he reached Fraunce's Tavern.

In at the doorway, up the stair, to the left, and down two steps he plunged and fetched a resounding whack upon his mother's door. He had meant to tap softly, and the blow of his own fist frightened him.

Betty flung the door wide, and at the same instant seized him in a choking embrace; then she pushed him toward the dame, who wept and hugged him, with cries over his altered looks. There was firelight, candlelight, a hot supper laid, a cozy chair, slippers waiting

beside the fire, and two tear-wet faces beaming welcome. Ah, it was home! The kind of home which love makes of the humblest spot.

After an hour of asking and answering eager questions, Duncan said soberly, "The lads on board the *Jolly Sally* are saying we're home just in time to see the British take ship."

"Sure, sure! Why, away on salt seas as thou hast been, thou knowest nothing at all, thou poor baby!" crooned his mother. "Aye, the war's over, and there's been but little fighting since Yorktown. The British, howsomever, do mortally hate to leave American soil. Thou art come, my laddie, just in time to see the Union Jack come down, and the Stars and Stripes go up."

"And, oh, there's to be doings, Duncan dear," continued Betty: "first there's to be a procession of our own troops from MacGowan's Pass, where they now lie, to Fort George. They'll march right down the Bowery. Only think how they'll feel marching back where they were once cast out! When the redcoats are out of the fort, in go we, and up goes our flag. Then will independence be no longer a word, but a fact, please God!"

Duncan's eyes slowly filled. "Mother," he said, "thou knowest when father died, 'twas his wish that I follow the sea as he and grandfather did afore me. I'm a sailor, of sailor folk; but I wish this night with all my heart that I had fought under the flag to make my land a separate nation! I wish I had been in one fight for freedom!"

"Hear the sprat prate!" said his mother with scorn,

but winking away the tears which showed her heart's sympathy. "Thou couldst have been in the fight all right, and shot down by British lead all right, as well: thou, that art the only son of a widowed mother! Just the same, my laddie Duncan, I wish myself thou hadst had a crack at the fighting, though thou be a long-legged sprat. 'Tis time we were away to our beds; 'tis very late."

Next morning Duncan's boxes were overhauled; and his mother cried out in one breath with motherly pity at sight of his clumsy, badly darned socks, while in the next she held up a bit of coral jewelry or a silken shawl, with exclamations of surprise and pleasure.

Duncan could not linger long within doors; his lungs craved fresh air; his feet, restrained so long to ship's decks, longed to stray abroad; and in a short time he was roaming about the town, scanning the City Hall, used by the British as a prison, and the Provost jail, with no particularly friendly glances. He revisited one spot after another, which had been familiar to his childhood.

As he was sauntering down Murray Street a peculiar whistle, a common call of the school playground, caught his ear. He turned curiously; and there, standing in the doorway of a grocer's shop, was Andy Carew, an old schoolmate. "'Tis really Duncan," he cried out; "I was not so very sure of it, but I could not doubt the legs! Such long legs and arms, thought I, can belong to none other than Duncan Longlegs!"

Duncan grinned upon hearing the old nickname, to wipe out which he had fought so many pitched battles, and came toward Andy with outstretched hands.

"Let's have a grip of your paw, Andy! How are you, old man? I'm pleased to see you, for yours is the first known face I've met."

"Bless my heart, if it be not Duncan Ketcham!" called a hearty voice from the interior of the little shop; and Mistress Carew, bustling forth, greeted Duncan warmly and drew him into her little back sitting room.

"Take the chair by the fire. My, but thou hast got the coat of sea tan upon thy face! Been twice around the world, I may well suppose, and seen grand places. Tell me, now, which of all is the grandest?"

"New York," fervently replied Duncan.

"Away with thee! This British-ridden hole! But we'll soon change that. Now, taste this jam and these cakes. Thou got no better than these in any port whatsoever, in the round world, say I. 'Tis as well, too, lad, that thou hast been in heathen parts, cruising with old Talbot, instead of lying here in these hells of prison ships, where our men have died like vermin! I'm glad thou wast not on the *Jersey*, for instance. 'Tis enough to wring tears from a stone image to think how our men were abused! Now, hark ye:—I was born in old England, and I dearly love her; and the day will surely come when she'll think shame of the deeds misguided men have done in her name in this land. It's not so much England that God will judge, as that Provost-Marshal Cunningham, ill jail keeper that he is! I can scarce keep my hands from the tail of his wig when he strides by our shop here, as if he, and not King George, were ruler of Britain! Dost thou see what I'm making? Thou knowest thine own flag, I hope. 'Tis a world o'

work to set these stars flat and shapely. It's to fly over our shop door on the morning the redcoats for the last time turn tail to the advance of General Washington and take to the high seas for their health." She laughed and took breath.

"I'll be here to raise it," cried Duncan.

"Aye, do come; we'll fly it under the Provost's very nose, and 'twill be a hearty token of farewell to him when he sets forth to ship."

The shop bell tinkled; some moments later Master Carew in white apron and spectacles entered the little back room. He greeted Duncan, and then turning to his wife began doubtfully, "The English officer in lodgings opposite, the tall one, who is such a strong friend to Cunningham, is dead, very suddenly."

"And small wonder," retorted his wife, with a sour face, "when ye think on his habits."

"True," continued Master Carew; "but ye also mind his little maid, Cicely. She and her serving lass are left all alone there. She's a bit of a maid, scarce twelve, and there's none to comfort her. His Tory friends are all fled away, and few English women are to be found."

"I'll have ye understand, good man, ye're looking straight at as good an English woman as ever drew breath, and it's not Eunice Carew will see any little maid in sorrow — and 'twere old Cunningham's own daughter! What's to do?"

"The serving lass says the maid's in a fever of sorrow and terror. Cunningham will look to the father's bestowal, but she can get no one to man a boat to take

them to Staten Island, where the child has Whig relatives."

"There's my boat," said Andy, promptly.

"And the morning long I've been aching to get my hand to tiller again," said Duncan.

"There be two lads who need no poking in the ribs to do a neighborly deed! I'll read the whole neighborhood a screed, if they lift voice against a kindness done to an innocent maid, because her dead father was Cunningham's friend: we Americans have suffered enough ourselves to know the feeling of pain!"

And the neighborhood did look suspiciously upon Mistress Carew's patriotism, till that coming hour, when she allayed its doubts forever.

Early, upon the morning of the 25th of November, all New York was astir; and breakfasts were dispatched by candlelight, that men, women, and children might the sooner finish necessary work, don holiday gear, and be abroad to see the town transformed from a British garrison to an American city, albeit a poor city. A nation was about to claim its own.

Within Fort George upon the Battery, a subdued bustle of departure held sway; but still at full mast upon the parade ground, the Union Jack flapped its folds to the strong breeze which blew over the water. For many years that flag had flapped in the breeze.

Betty had been one of the earliest risers in Fraunce's Tavern; but early as she was, Duncan was earlier, and her knock upon his door elicited no response. He and Andy Carew were fastening a flagstaff and rigging tackle over the doorway of the Murray Street shop.

Holiday crowds thronged Queen and Wall streets soon after eight o'clock; the Continentals were expected to pass through those streets on their way to Fort George. It was supposed that the British would begin to leave soon after daybreak, and the Americans hoped to be in the fort before nine o'clock; but it fell out otherwise. Restless and impatient, the crowd surged to and fro; and the British flag still flung its folds to the wind.

Duncan and Andy shifted their places from street to street till they began to weary.

"There's one American flag flying in the town anyway, Duncan," crowed Andy, as they turned their steps toward Murray Street. "Come home and let us get a bit to eat. The redcoats won't stir till noon. They're baiting us, the tormentors! 'Tis their last whack!"

As the boys turned into Murray Street, they observed with pride the bright little flag waving from its staff. It was then but shortly after ten o'clock.

Entering the shop, they found Master Carew, with pursed-up lips, sitting upon one of his flour sacks, watching the door. "Come here," he cried to the boys; "I thought you might be the enemy himself! They have carried the news to the Provost that I am flying the Stars and Stripes, and I'm looking for a little visit from him. The good wife's upstairs. Women have no place in a fray."

Andy glanced thoughtfully from his phlegmatic father to the ceiling from which the swish of his mother's broom could be plainly heard, and then said: "Father,

I trust Cunningham will not outargue thee. Thou art a peaceful man, not giving blows suddenly."

"Blows!" roared the old man. "Let him dare offer blows to an American citizen!"

"Or an insult to the American flag! Ye see we've taken our chances, father. The flag still flies at Fort George, and the city is in the hands of the British."

"That's a true word," said Master Carew, rubbing his chin.

Provost Cunningham was habitually a late riser; and he did not alter his habits upon this particular morning, because he expected before nightfall to be at sea on a British man-o'-war.

He heard the morning's gossip from his servant, listening with a sour face, which crimsoned to wrath when he learned of the flag flying in Murray Street.

"I'll read that Yankee grocer one last lesson," he roared, making frantic grabs for his hat and stick. "He will, will he? He dares to flaunt his upstart rag under the flag of Britain! I'll smite him, alone and single-handed! Kindness to Colonel Culpepper's child, forsooth! What's that to do with arrogance and treason? Stand out of my way!"

He stormed across Broadway and down Murray Street. By the time he reached Master Carew's door, he was boiling with rage. Swearing violently, he stood beneath the flag and shook his fist up at it.

Master Carew appeared in his doorway, and the full tide of the Provost's abuse was directed upon him.

"Pull it down," he roared; "the city belongs to the British till noon!"

"It is up to stay," retorted Grocer Carew.

"You are flying it on British soil, and I am no traitor to wink at such an act. Down with this flag, I say! — down! — or I will pull it down with my own hands. Are you better than your own general, who has the decency to wait until the fort is evacuated?"

"Since you state it that way, perhaps in deference to General Washington, I might furl it temporarily," pompously began Master Carew; but his sentence was never finished, for suddenly Mistress Carew swept through the doorway, pushed the good man aside, and faced the Provost.

"The flag will not be furled," she said calmly. "'Tis up to stay up. Just content yourself for an hour or two till 'tis time to pull your own down. These colors are not to be struck on their own soil. You're standing on Yankee dirt, my man; ye'll mind my words." She leaned upon her broom handle and regarded the Provost with dignity. He was purple in the face and speechless with fury. The flag hung somewhat low over the shop door, and the Provost was a tall man. He twisted his great fist into one corner of it to give it a mighty, ripping jerk — but quicker than his jerk was the swift and downward thwack of the broom upon his head. The powder of his wig flew in a cloud from it, and the Provost saw stars. Then it was that the neighborhood, peering from behind curtain and blind, vindicated Mistress Carew's patriotism.

Staggering back, he turned upon Mistress Carew; but the broom confronted him.

"Go to your ship, ye old reprobate, and thank God

if it does not sink with ye, who have done such evil in the sight of Him. Go, I say! for with every word against that flag, ye'll feel the thump of my besom over your head! Good day to you!"

The Provost, seeing two tall lads with twitching fists standing directly back of the broom, picked up his hat, set his wig straight, and departed, muttering.



"HE TWISTED HIS GREAT FIST INTO ONE CORNER OF IT TO GIVE IT A MIGHTY, RIPPING JERK."

Shortly after noon, a British staff officer reported to General Washington that the rear guard of the British army was embarking at the Battery. The American column then moved down the Bowery to Cape's Tavern,

where a line was formed, and they stood at "parade rest," while the main guard marched down Broadway to Fort George, amidst throngs of joyous, excited people. The troops marched with the easy swing of old campaigners; and although their uniforms were tarnished and shabby, their faces shone with soldierly pride and the happiness which comes with hard-won victory.

As the guard passed into the old fort, the scene was most impressive. In the upper bay, just off the Battery, stately war ships lay at anchor, while their boats, loaded to their gunwhales with redcoated grenadiers and bluecoated mercenaries, were slowly moving away from the landing. In a short time the fleet would set sail for England.

Fort George, for so many years a British garrison, had lain empty and waiting, as the long line of British boats slowly crept from the shore, and the main guard of Washington's troops approached to take final possession.

An artillery officer, charged with the duty of hoisting the Stars and Stripes, entered the inclosed parade ground, where the tall flag pole stood in full view of all on-lookers. Instead of the ascending American flag, which was looked for so expectantly, the mast remained bare; and the young officer returned to the outer gateway with chagrin written upon his face. The flag pole had been soaped, the halyards cut, and the cleats knocked off and destroyed. The purpose was evident; no American flag should wave over British defeat as their boats went down the harbor. Thus the British had decreed.

The cheated Americans determined otherwise. Dun-



"CHEER AFTER CHEER GREETED HIM AS HE AT LENGTH REACHED THE TOP."



can, in his sailor's suit, caught some one's eye, and he was rapidly shoved forward.

"Climb the pole, Longlegs," cried the impatient voice of a neighbor.

Duncan tried, clinging to the slippery pole with all his trained might, but in vain.

"Come with me to Goelet's hardware shop in Hanover Square," cried Andy's voice; he was really shouting only at Duncan, but a crowd took to heels at the suggestion and lost no time on their errand. Back they came, headed by Andy, and laden with hammers, saws, strips of wood, new halyards, and other necessary materials.

While some sawed and split wood into cleats, others bored holes in them.

Duncan wrapped the new halyards about his wrist, took a bundle of cleats over his shoulder, filled his pockets with nails, and, holding a hammer for use, began an ascent by nailing the cleats to the left and right of him as he went up. Cheer after cheer greeted him as he at length reached the top, strung the halyards, and made everything ready for the raising of the flag.

✓ The Stars and Stripes reached the top of the mast; a salute of thirteen guns, fired from their own pieces, reached the ears of the discomfited British; and the flag of the young nation floated before their angry eyes as New York went wild with joy.

Duncan related his exploit to his mother beside their sitting-room fire that night.

"Well done, lad," she cried out heartily. "Thou never had a chance to fight for thy flag, but thou hast kept it from shame this first day of its victory; and

God be thanked for thy sea training and thy long legs."

On the following day, since his leave was at an end, Duncan was rowed out to the *Jolly Sally*; and there he found his nickname, Longlegs, no longer a jest, but a matter of lasting honor to him, from the captain down to the cook. And the solid tokens of the cook's esteem were as soothing to his stomach as were the captain's gruff commendations to his happy, boyish heart.

Upon the morning of December 6, the *Jolly Sally* was once more to set sail; and upon the evening of the fifth, Captain Talbot gave Duncan three hours' leave in which to take farewell of his mother and sister.

Dame Ketcham was torn between her sorrow at parting with her son again and her pride in what had befallen her children.

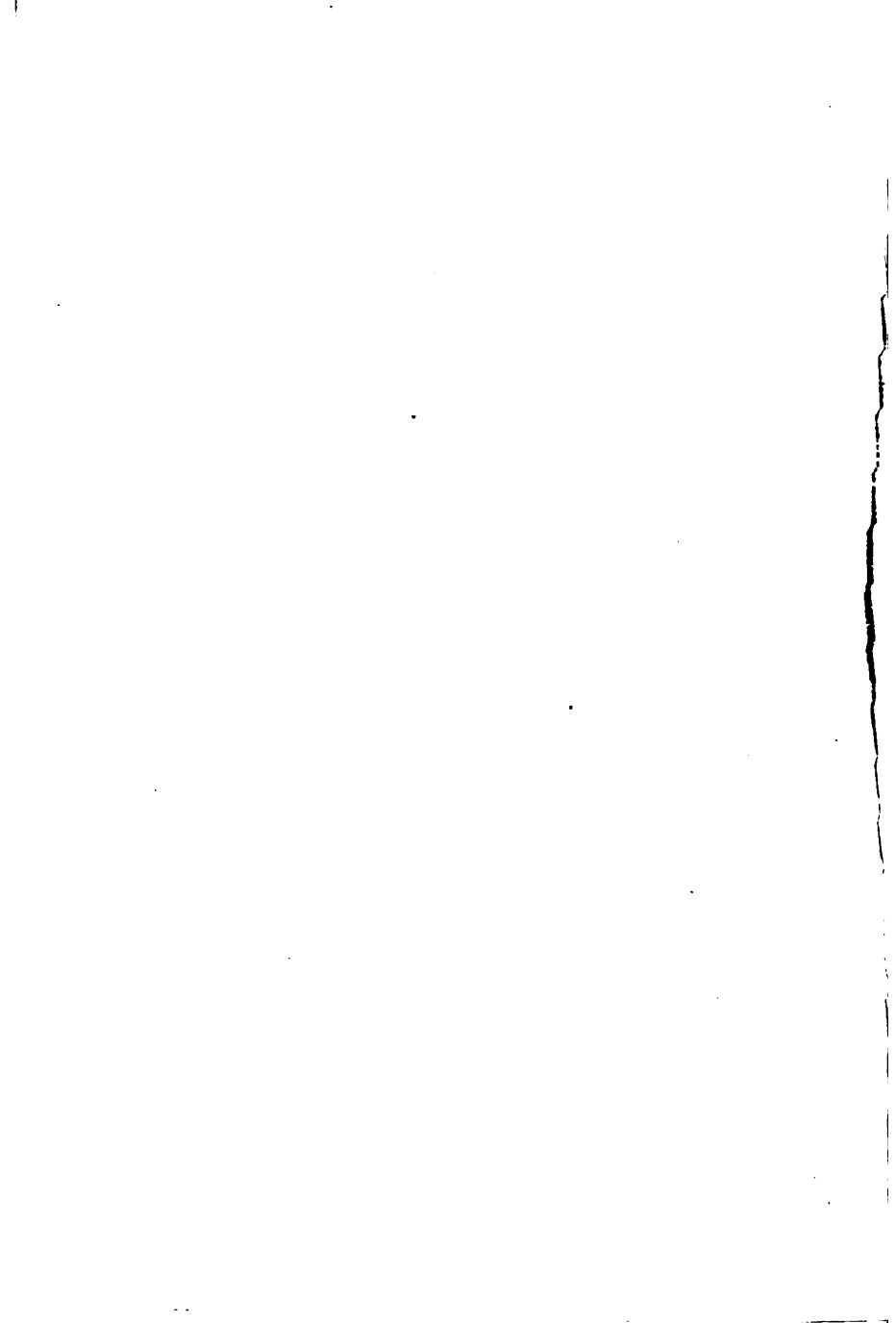
"For 'twas Betty herself served General Washington and his officers yesterday in the great parlor; aye, 'twas sad to see the way they took on, parting from one another. 'Twas the rending asunder of a deep, deep tie. I'll ne'er forget it! His words were that beautiful that I cried salt tears in the little pantry. And when all the men shook hands with him and he looked so tenderly upon each one, I was fain to run away for sobbing.

"They all cried, too, God bless their men's hearts! — and then he left us. He walked out quietly between two files of his soldiers, and not a dry eyelash to one of them, and took his way with his generals to Whitehall. A boat met him there, and he left New York.

"Duncan, lad, consider it well. Thou standest in the day of history. The *Jolly Sally* sailed into a British

port and sails out of an American one. Thou hast a country of thine own; and if more fighting is to be done to prove it, thou shalt fight, though thou be my only son."

When years later, as an old woman, Dame Ketcham embraced Duncan after he had won honors in the War of 1812, she laughed as she declared, "I'm proud of ye, my son, but not so proud as I was on the day thy long legs helped to hoist the flag above Fort George."



GLOSSARY

besom, broom.

benison, blessing.

billet, p. 110, a small log or stick of wood.

billeted, p. 110, labeled or ticketed, this word *billet* meaning ticket.

The corn sacks were billeted, each with its owner's ticket.

bonnet, a name often given to a boy's close-fitting cloth cap. This cap was ordinarily of Scotch style; in Scotland, *bonnet* being the common name for a man's headgear. To **bonnet**, to put on a head covering; applied to either sex.

byre, the old-country name for a cow shed.

calash, a lady's hood, pumpkin-shaped, which, when worn, could be thrown forward or back like the top of the carriage called *calash*.

camlet, a kind of cloth much in use for the thick cloaks of earlier fashions. It was woven usually of goat's hair and silk.

cassowary, see **sampler**.

clean of limb, p. 21, a phrase applied to men or lads who bore themselves gracefully and were well or slenderly built.

cleats, wooden crosspieces extending from a pole (the flagstaff) on either side to form a ladder.

cock-and-bull story, a story so exaggerated and improbable that no one will believe it. The phrase probably once alluded to some old fable or to a story in which a cock and a bull were made to act with more than animal intelligence.

coil, entanglement, perplexity, or mesh.

cosset, noun: a pet lamb; therefore, verb: to pet and fondle.

cricket, a low, three-legged stool, usually of wood.

doubloon, a Spanish and Spanish-American gold coin worth, in the first half of the eighteenth century, about \$8.24. Captain Kidd (p. 30) had in all probability robbed a Spanish merchantman.

Embrasured window, a window having a deep window seat formed by a thick house wall.

fairing, an old word now rarely heard. It is derived from the old-

country fair, a place for buying and selling home products. A man's money taken home from his sale made at a fair, or presents bought with such money, alike received the name of *fairing*.

farandole, a dance common in the south of France. It is a symbol of common rejoicing and good fellowship. It is danced by two or by any number of persons in a circle facing alternately in and out and joining hands, and by the rapid performance of these motions making various figures.

foot valance. *Valance* was the name given to a drapery, usually white, which extended from the edges of a bed to the floor. As bed curtains also were called *valances*, the former drapery was distinguished as *foot valance*.

haled, an old form of the word *hauled*.

halyards, a rope or tackling used for hoisting or lowering sails or flags.

harked back, a hunting phrase, referring to the cries used to call the hounds back to the starting place for a fresh start. It came to mean any fresh start or going back again to anything once left.

hopper, a receptacle or box usually funnel-shaped, with an opening at the lower part for delivering or feeding the whole grain down to the grindstones.

ilk. In the old days of England, the phrase "of that ilk," used after a person's surname, denoted that his name and the title of his estate were the same. The word itself meant *same*, and later was wrongly but commonly used to mean *sort* or *kind*. See p. 27. The expression is seldom seen in modern English.

kirtle, an outer petticoat, also a mantle or cloak.

lattice, a window. The windows of olden days were set to open inward like double doors. The panes were set in a lattice-work made of wood or metal, crossing diagonally to make a diamond-shaped pattern.

lavender spears, the dried blossoms of an English plant whose flowers grow in narrow, spear-shaped clusters. They have a pungent, lasting perfume and are used for scenting linen.

leal, a North English and Scotch form of the word *loyal*. It means also *faithful*, *honest*, *true*.

lubber, a heavy, clumsy, awkward fellow.

masque, an entertainment of any sort given at a pleasure gathering.

Originally, the players, called *mummers*, were masked; and their name was suggested by the mumbling sound caused by talking behind the mask.

moccasins, shoes commonly worn by the Indians. They were made of deerskin or other soft leather.

moppet, a rag baby or a puppet made of cloth; but used also as a term of endearment for a baby girl or a woman.

mummers, see **masque**.

paddock, a small farm inclosure, usually a pasture, near a stable.

It was used for keeping the animals in safety.

panniers, a pair of baskets slung across a beast of burden, to carry provisions or other goods.

pillion, a pad or cushion put behind the man's saddle, on which the woman rode. Before carriages were generally used this was the common way for women to go about with their husbands, fathers, brothers, or other relatives.

pot cheeseing, an old-time children's pastime, particularly for girls. This consisted of a rapid whirling of the body till the skirts, which were worn very full, flew out when the player suddenly stopped. The effect was to balloon out the skirts to resemblance of a pot cheese, a kind of cheese made of milk curds.

sampler, a piece of embroidery considered a very necessary part of a young girl's education. Usually, it was a square of canvas to be cross-stitched with silk or wool in alphabetical forms and figures. Besides, these samplers were worked in odd designs of houses, trees, birds, and animals. The *cassowary*, an East Indian bird somewhat resembling the ostrich, was one of these designs.

screed, a loud or high-pitched scolding or harangue. *To read one a screed* was to lecture one seriously.

settle, a wooden bench made with a very high back, used in or near the fireplace.

shoon, old plural for *shoe*.

side lights of the door. In the old houses, the hallways were very wide; and on either side the broad hall door were built long,

narrow windows, paned with glass. These were called *side-lights*.

Sieur, a title of respect much used in old times by the French, but now in use only in their law practice.

sluice, an artificial passage for water fitted with a valve or a gate. In the mill (p. 109) the sluices led the water over the wheel when the corn was to be ground. By closing the sluices, the wheel would be stopped and the grinding would cease.

smitch, small portion, bit. Instead of "a good bit," the old form was "a good smitch."

stinting, doing a certain amount of work set down for one as a task. A word much used in old days, especially by young girls at their sewing.

stunt pines, dwarf pine trees, two to five feet in height. They abound on sandy strips near water.

tally sticks, pieces of wood upon which notches were cut to show (p. 110) how many sacks of flour were ground for one man from time to time throughout a year, or between the times when payments were due.

tender. In many harbors the water is not sufficiently deep to allow ships of heavy draught to land close to shore. In such cases small harbor vessels called *tenders* ply between the ships and the shore, fetching and carrying both passengers and merchandise.

trailed arms, muskets carried so that they are tipped obliquely forward, held by the middle, with the butt end trailing on the ground.

trundle-bed, a low bed that is moved on little wheels or *trundles*, so that it can be put out of the way under a higher bed.

walked at her spinning wheel. In wool spinning, the spinner walked back and forth before the large wheel. Flax was spun with a much smaller wheel, by which the spinner worked sitting.

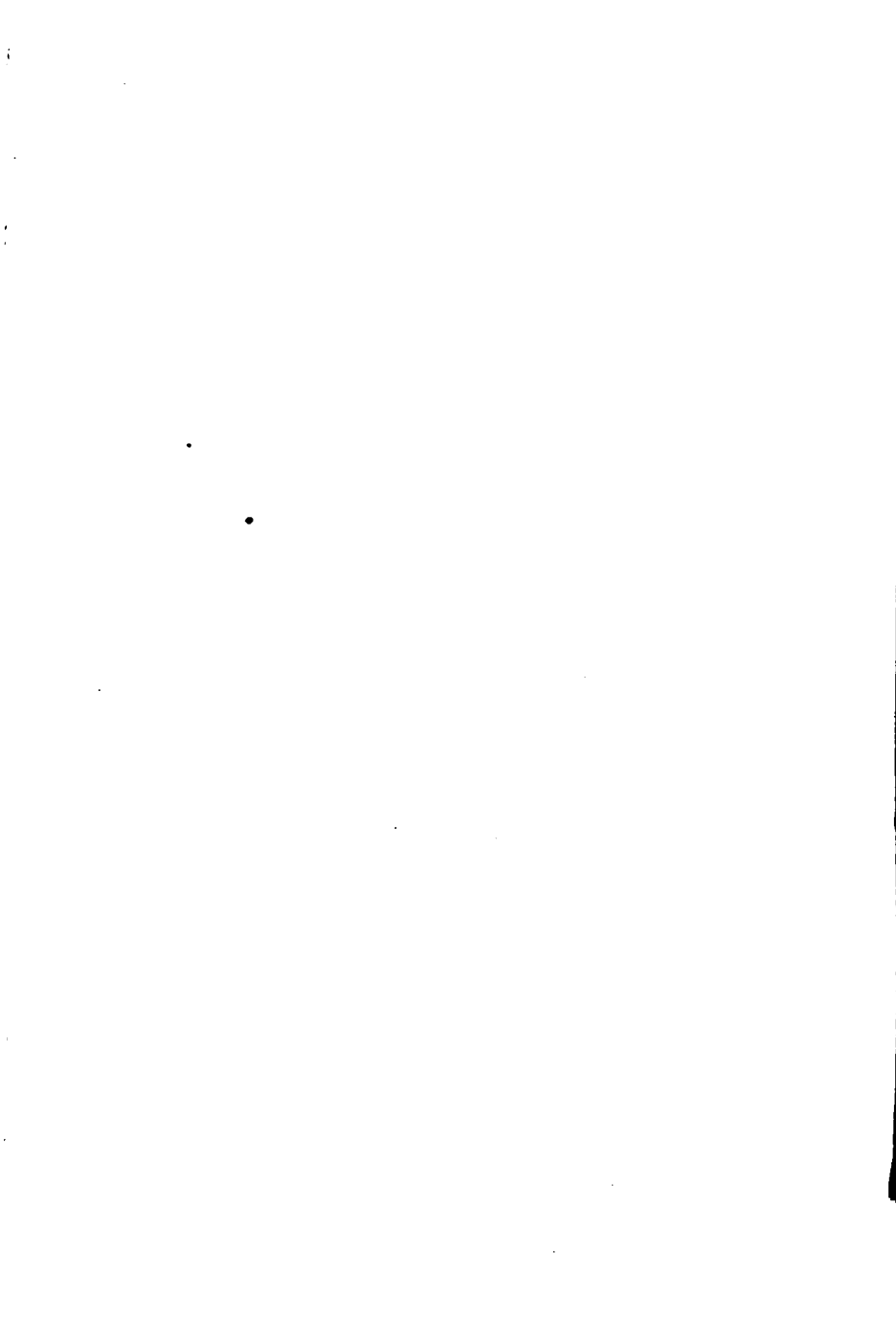
weeny, old-time expression for "very little."

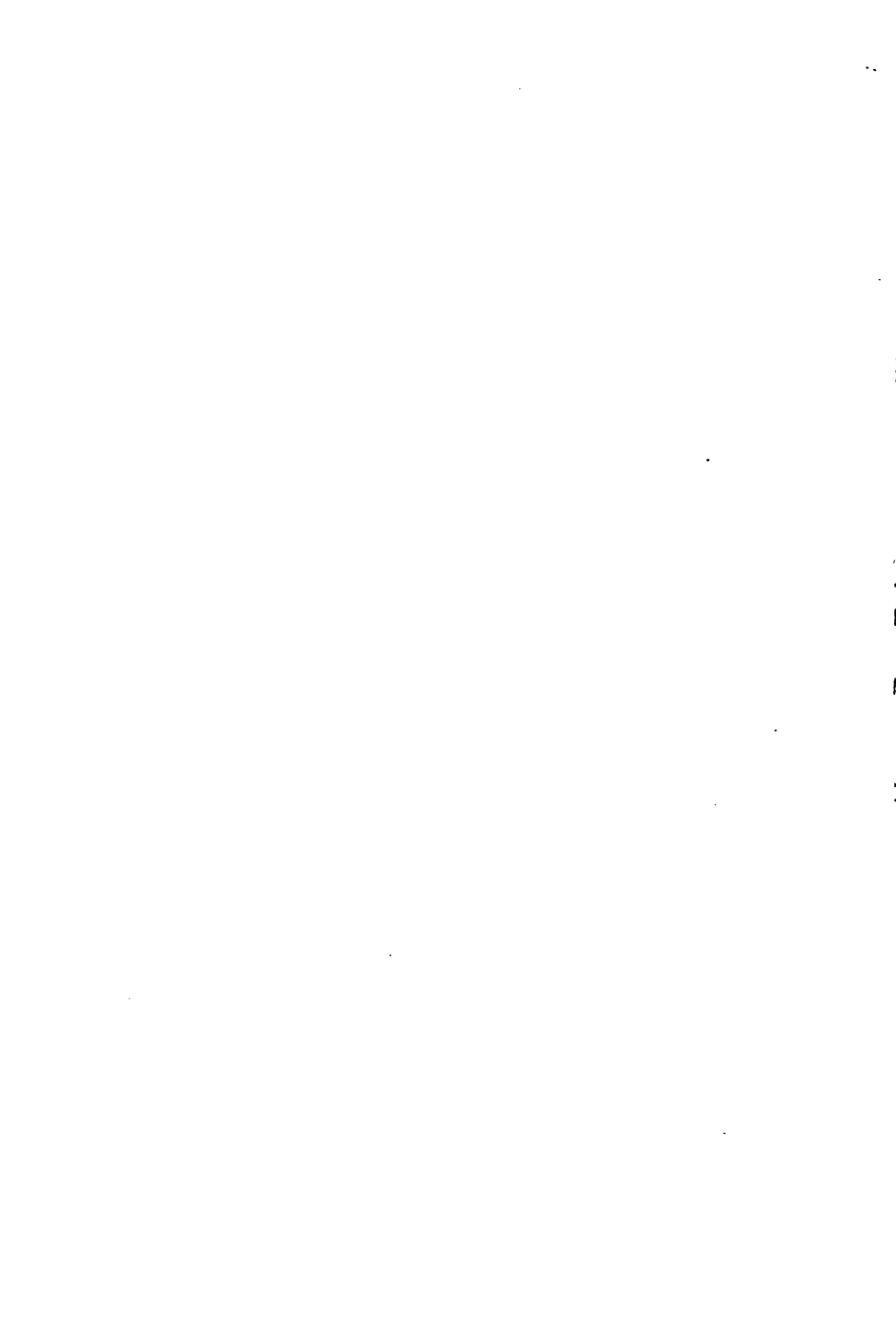
wended, went, took one's way.

withe, several tree twigs twisted together and bound. It made a rough, short whip by which a rider could guide his horse.

wot, know or knew.

wry, twisted or crooked.









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